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Palestinian team meets Christopher

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A Palestinian delegation met Monday with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to discuss the situation on the ground. Just two days before an agreement to launch autonomy is due to be signed, the delegation head Faisal Husseini said the Palestinians were "not satisfied at all." Mr. Husseini said: "We are concerned about the Israeli implementation on the ground, especially about the isolation of Jerusalem. We have made it clear that such a policy goes on, it can be the element which can kill such an opportunity to implement autonomy. Mr. Husseini stressed that an agreement suitable to the Palestinians was paramount, not the deadline for signing it. Among the nine delegates at the meeting in the U.S. consulate in East Jerusalem were the head of the Palestinian delegation to the bilateral Middle East peace talks, Saeb Erakat, and former spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi.

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Mandela claims election victory

De Klerk concedes defeat to the man he freed after 27 years in jail

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies) — African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela claimed victory Monday in South Africa's national election. "This is indeed a joyous night," he said, eight days before he was due to be inaugurated as the country's first black president. Two and one-half hours after President F.W. de Klerk conceded defeat, Mr. Mandela stood before an ecstatic crowd in a ballroom draped in ANC colours to accept the reward of a life spent fighting apartheid. "This is your victory too," Mr. Mandela said. "You helped end apartheid." With an estimated 42 per cent of the votes counted, the ANC had 62.1 per cent of the tally to 24 per cent for Mr. De Klerk's National Party. The Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) was a distant third at 6.3 per cent, followed by the white, pro-apartheid Freedom Front at 2.9 per cent. The ANC was projected to win around 240 seats in the new 400-seat parliament, based on Mr. Mandela's overwhelming popularity among the black majority. His speech, and that of Mr. De Klerk, marked the end of a remarkable era that began with Mr. Mandela's release from prison in February 1990 and culminated last week when the country's black majority voted Tuesday-Friday in the first democratic election. About 300 people, many of them weeping, watched Mr. De Klerk as he conceded the end of his presidency at National Party headquarters in Pretoria. It was all over for white rule just after 6 p.m. (1600 GMT) when Mr. De Klerk strode through cheering supporters, his wife Marike at his side, and flanked by his white cabinet ministers. Referring to the reconciliation government of National Unity which Mr. Mandela will set up after his inauguration on May 10, Mr. De Klerk said: "Next Tuesday I shall lay down my responsibilities as state president... I shall be handing

over the presidency to Mr. Mandela, but I shall not be leaving government. "I shall be surrendering power — not to the majority of the moment but to the South African people." Mr. De Klerk, who set in train apartheid reforms that led to this moment, choked when he mentioned the support of his wife through his often trying reformist years, and his voice cracked again when he ended his speech. He closed with the words "God bless South Africa" and "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" — God bless Africa in the words of the black liberation anthem, words rarely uttered by a white leader. "Mr. Mandela has walked a long road and now stands at the top of the hill," he said of the ANC leader, who spent 27 years in prison for opposing the policies imposed by Mr. De Klerk's party. "I hold out my hand to Mr. Mandela in

(Continued on page 2)

Israel, PLO 'geared up' to sign self-rule deal

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) moved close to final agreement on Monday as time ticked away to Wednesday's scheduled signing by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. The autonomy accord for the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho would "give the Palestinian people for the first time the right to have a hand in its own destiny on its territory," Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat are due here Tuesday to tackle the thorny questions of the size

See page 5 for text of draft accord

Chief PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath told a news conference: "We finished all legal aspects, the drafting of the agreement is almost finished. There is only one paper left on security, which will be discussed this evening" on the extent of Palestinian territorial waters. He said he was "confident that we are at the gate of a major achievement for our people."

of the autonomous area of Jericho and the presence of a Palestinian policeman on the King Hussein Bridge linking Jordan and the West Bank, as well as any last-minute hitches. Dr. Shaath said the 9,000-strong Palestinian police force was "ready to go" moving into the areas to replace Israeli troops, as the PLO had received "detailed news about the Israeli withdrawal."

Unemployment jump feared in occupied lands

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A massive jump in Palestinian unemployment could hit the occupied territories during transition to autonomy and pose a threat to stability, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) said. In a report released Monday, the U.N. organisation said the job crisis could jeopardise peace in the region unless urgent measures are taken. The ILO said unemployment already stands at 25 per cent in the territories overall, including 41 per cent in the Gaza Strip.

"A jump in unemployment, even if temporary, could be a crucial factor working against peace and stability during the transition," the report said. The territories have a population of roughly two million, half of whom are 15 years old or less. The labour force stands at 310,000 or 34 per cent of the adult population. Up to 30 per cent of the labour force has found employment in the Israeli economy. The labour force is expected to jump to 470,000 by 2000, the report said. According to the ILO, the territories have to generate 12,500 new jobs annually just

Doha talks open today

DOHA (AP) — Delegations from more than 40 countries, including Israel, held informal discussions Monday ahead of a conference aimed at laying plans for arms control and regional security in the Middle East once peace is established. The formal conference will be opened on Tuesday by Foreign Ministry Sheikh Hamad Ben Jasssem Ben Jaber Al Thani, the official Qatari News Agency said. It said Monday's gathering discussed the agenda, but provided no further details.

This will be the fifth meeting of the arms control and security committee, one of five multilateral groups that branched off the Middle East peace process begun in Madrid in October 1991. The four other groups are concerned with water, refugees, environment and economic development. It was the first time the arms group convened outside the United States or Russia, which are co-sponsors of the peace effort. Israel's defence ministry director-general David Ivri, who heads the Israeli delegation, said he felt Wednesday's signing in Cairo of a Palestinian autonomy accord would influence the meeting. (Continued on page 9)



Jordan marks 41st year of King Hussein's assumption of his constitutional powers

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan on Monday marked the 41st anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's assumption of his constitutional powers. No ceremonies were held because of the death of Her Majesty Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother, last week. Born in Amman in 1935, King Hussein was brought up under the care of his grandfather, the late King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, who founded the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and his father, the late King Talal Ben Abdullah and his mother, the late Queen Zein. The King acceded to the Throne in 1952 when he was 17 years, but assumed his constitutional powers in the following year. He led Jordan through enormous difficulties towards development.

Despite his young age at the time of assuming power, the King's clear vision, far-sightedness and long-term strategies enabled him to realise a number of ambitious development projects which brought Jordan to the forefront of developing countries. At the national level Jordan's achievements under the King's leadership were enormous. In the field of education, the number of schools has risen from 487 in 1953 to more than 4,000. The number of teachers also rose from 2,378 to more than 52,000. The number of universities and higher education institutes has risen from zero to 13 universities and 61 community colleges. In the area of health, Jordan has doubled the number of hospitals. From a modest 10 hospitals with 663 beds,

Jordan now has 20 hospitals with more than 3,000 beds. The number of doctors at the Ministry of Health has also increased from 52 doctors to more than 2,300, in addition to hundreds of dentists, pharmacists, nurses, and midwives. In 1950, Jordan had 895 kilometres of roads, but now it has about 7,000 kilometres, in addition to 7,000 kilometres of agricultural roads. Similar remarkable achievements are also seen in housing and social development. King Hussein has paid special attention to the Armed Forces and equipped them with the most up-to-date weapons to defend the nation. The Jordanian army is now contributing to maintaining

international peace and security in different parts of the world. At the pan-Arab level, the King has always stood by Arab causes and has sought to unite Arab ranks and ensure Arab solidarity. Ever since he assumed his constitutional powers, the Palestine question has remained the King's major preoccupation. The King has spared no effort to defend the legitimate Palestinian rights and has supported the Palestine cause at the various international fora. King Hussein has believed in and worked for safeguarding the Arab identity of Jerusalem. The King also spared no effort to heal inter-Arab rifts. He had provided support to Arab brethren in Algeria, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, Sudan and Palestine.

Jordan will not attend autonomy signing

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan will not attend the signing in Cairo on Wednesday of an agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel to implement Palestinian self-rule in the Israeli-occupied territories, officials said Monday.

A senior Jordanian official told the Jordan Times that the Kingdom had "apologised and will not send anyone to the signing ceremony." Representatives of around 40 countries are expected to attend the signing of the self-rule agreement by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The official, who asked for anonymity, would not elaborate on the reasons for Jordan's absence from the Cairo ceremony, but analysts believed it was to underline Jordan's displeasure at the lack of coordination with the PLO. Other political sources, however, said they believed that the Jordanian decision was largely dictated by its declared policy of keeping a low profile in the Middle East peace negotiations until the Kingdom's demand for an end to the interception of Aqaba-bound ships is met.

But other sources also maintain that Jordan is "displeased at being marginalised in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, and some of the points in the agreement have implications on Jordan without its taking part in any of the decisions reached." After Israel and the PLO signed the Declaration of Principles on the White House lawn Sept. 13, King Hussein had said the Kingdom "will not be party to an agreement in-

volving Jordan without having a role" in the negotiations. Jordan has also often criticised the PLO for not coordinating its position with the Kingdom before reaching agreements with Israel. Jordan has abstained from an active role in the Middle East peace process until the Kingdom's demand for an end to the interception of Aqaba-bound vessels is satisfactorily met.

This week, the Kingdom sent a lone observer to the multilateral working group on disarmament in Qatar and earlier this month Jordan sent only an observer to a meeting of the multilateral working group on water in Oman. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, after a meeting with King Hussein in London last Monday, announced that "subject to fine-tuning" Washington has accepted a Jordanian proposal under which Lloyds Register in London will be in charge of a sanction-verification regime at Aqaba port.

Information Minister Jawad Al Anani told the Jordan Times that despite the fact that Washington's acceptance "removed a major obstacle" from the way of renewed Jordanian participation in negotiations, the Kingdom was awaiting final agreement and implementation of the Aqaba arrangement before assuming its role in the talks. Other senior officials have since then said that the Kingdom needs to be reassured that its sovereignty and territorial integrity would not be brought into question in any proposed modality for the sanctions-verification procedures. They said Jordan had certain

(Continued on page 9)

4 Israeli soldiers wounded in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Palestinians opened fire on an army patrol in the occupied Gaza Strip Monday, shooting two soldiers and injuring two others when their jeep turned over, the army said.

No one was killed in the incident, but it took on added significance coming just two days before the expected signing of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreement to implement Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and the West Bank area of Jericho. Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur said the violence would not deter the government from its peace plans and added that forces would be concentrated in the area to apprehend the gunmen.

Mr. Gur noted that negotiations to extend autonomy after Gaza-Jericho depended on the success of the Palestinians in warding off future violence. "If the Palestinian side does not fill its side of the agreement, we are free to decide how we see the rest of the process and which steps we should take in order to assure the existence... of the state and the security of the residents," Mr. Gur told army radio. The army was on alert in Gaza to ward off attacks launched to torpedo the signing Wednesday of the agreement to implement autonomy, Israel Radio in Arabic said. The Palestinians shot at the soldiers from a two-storey house inside the Gaza Strip town of Khan Yunis, near the Jewish settlement of Ganei

Israel and Syria in 'serious' phase

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The United States and Israel on Monday said peace efforts with Syria have entered a serious phase as Secretary of State Warren Christopher brought reaction from Damascus to the latest initiative.

"The efforts to reach peace between Israel and Syria are very serious," Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Monday. But he called for time to consider Syria's reaction to the proposals that Mr. Christopher put to President Hafez Al Assad over the weekend. Mr. Christopher added: "The negotiations have reached a new and different substantive level. The parties are seriously engaged in substantive discussions."

"It is significant that the parties are now talking on a comprehensive range of issues and those discussions will continue." According to official sources in Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's office, progress has been made. "For the first time Syria has not totally rejected Israel's proposals but has declared readiness to take into account Israel's security needs," the sources said. Mr. Christopher refused to answer when asked if Syria rejected Israel's peace package. Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said Sunday: "Syria does not accept a peace in stages with Israel and is committed to a total withdrawal from Arab occupied land." But he left the door open for negotiations. "We have asked many questions on the proposals and these are substantive questions that the Israeli side must give an answer to," Mr. Sharaa said.

Mr. Rabin has offered to return three of five Druze villages on the plateau as a first stage in a three-step withdrawal over five-eight years, officials said. But the score of the withdrawal plan remains a secret.

"The negotiations are only beginning and any leaks on the Israeli proposals can only do us harm," Mr. Rabin said. "We did not give any (withdrawal) maps to Christopher and certainly no map showing the last line to which we intend to pull back," Mr. Rabin told his Labour Party. Syria has demanded the return of all the Heights seized in the 1967 Middle East war.

Mr. Rabin spelled out the strategic importance of peace with Damascus after talks and lunch with Mr. Christopher. "I want to be sure that we have done everything we can to prevent the negotiations with Syria from hogging down," he said. "I don't say that failure means immediate war but I know what failure can bring." "I do not want to see in the future a strategic alliance between Baghdad, Tehran and Damascus. We have to avoid that," he warned. "After five years of Palestinian autonomy, the Palestinians will no longer be a threat to Israel, the Syrians still will be if we do not make peace." Mr. Rabin dismissed belief in the strategic value of settlements as an "anachronism." "During the 1973 war everyone knows that on the Golan what counted was the number of tanks and not the number of settlements," he said. Heated opposition to Mr. Rabin's conciliatory approach

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Military build-up reported in northern Bosnia

SARAJEVO (R) — Tension increased in northern Bosnia on Monday with Muslim and Serb media reporting a military build-up near the strategically vital Serb-held town of Breko. Muslim-controlled Sarajevo Radio said Serb forces were moving equipment and men from Gorazde front, eastern Bosnia, to Breko, in what it said was the "strongest concentration of combat potential since the beginning of the war."

Bosnian Serb radio reported Muslim forces massing outside the northern Muslim stronghold of Tuzla, some 50 kilometres southwest of Breko. Commander Eric Chaperon, the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) Spokesman in Sarajevo, acknowledged the reports of a build-up, echoing information from U.S. intelligence sources last week, but said the area was calm for the moment. Backo forms a bottleneck on

a "corridor" land route linking Serb-held lands in Bosnia and Croatia to Serbia proper. The 70 per cent of Bosnian territory the Serbs now hold resembles a horseshoe and at one point, near Breko, it is only five kilometres wide. The reported military build-up followed the first use by UNPROFOR of its most lethal military equipment against attacking Bosnian Serb forces in Kalesija near Tuzla.

Bosnian Serbs said they suffered nine dead and four wounded after eight German-built Leopard tanks belonging to a Danish UNPROFOR contingent responded to a Serb attack on Friday by firing 72 shells. Mr. Chaperon told a news conference the east Bosnian town of Gorazde was still tense and there had been firefights on Sunday between Serb and Muslim forces on the edge of a three-kilometre exclusion zone around the Muslim enclave.

A North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) ultimatum threatening air strikes helped to end a Serb siege there last weekend. The Serbs were ordered to withdraw their infantry from a three-kilometre zone around Gorazde and pull their heavy weapons back 20 kilometres. "The situation is tense but currently within the scope of UNPROFOR forces in the town," Mr. Chaperon said. "There have been several firefights but no resumption of full-scale hostilities, nor an indication that such is probable." Mr. Chaperon said there were about 100 mostly unarmed Serb policemen in or around the Gorazde three-kilometre zone.

He reported three rounds of small arms fire over the U.N. base in Gorazde and said nine rounds were fired back. On Friday British peacekeepers monitoring the zone came under Serb fire.

A convoy of 160 fresh British troops sent to Gorazde to reinforce the 500 U.N. soldiers already there was still blocked by the Serbs at Rogatica wanting to search all their personal belongings. Mr. Chaperon said. Sarajevo Radio reported on Monday that three shells hit the besieged Bosnian capital overnight and said a woman aged 22 died and four people were hurt by Serb shelling of Tuzla on Sunday.

It said nearby Zavidovici was shelled by the Serbs and accused the Bosnian Serb army of launching a new offensive against government forces around Doboj and Tesanj, both in northern Bosnia. The Yugoslav news agency Tanjug reported four Serb civilians killed and an unspecified number wounded on the Orthodox Christian Easter Sunday by Muslim artillery shells falling on the centre and

suburbs of Doboj. Mr. Chaperon said the bodies of two dead American journalists would be removed on Monday from the mined area near Mostar in southern Bosnia where their car was blown up on Sunday. UNPROFOR named the journalists as Brian Brinton of Magnolia News and Francis Tomasic from U.S. pop culture magazine Spin.

Mr. Chaperon said they were on a road which was known to be mined. "They should never have been on it," he said. A third American journalist, named as William Voltmann, also from Spin magazine, was slightly hurt, the spokesman said, and was at a Spanish U.N. field hospital at Dracevo, near Mostar. More than 40 journalists have been killed in former Yugoslavia while covering fighting which erupted in 1991.

S. Arabia to ban Iranian rallies

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia will ban Iranian pilgrims from holding political rallies at this year's Haj, the annual pilgrimage, Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz said.

The official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) quoted Prince Nayef as saying on Sunday night that Saudi Arabia has officially informed Iran that its pilgrims would not be allowed to hold rallies at the Haj, which reaches its climax later this month.

Asked about reports that the Iranians were planning rallies, Prince Nayef said: "I have heard of this and read about it... they said they will (hold rallies) and we say no they won't."

"They know it will not happen and they have been informed of this," SPA quoted him as saying.

Tehran Radio had said on Sunday that a group of Iranian pilgrims left for Saudi Arabia after being told it was

their duty to hold political rallies in defiance of a Saudi ban.

It said Ayatollah Mohammad Mohammadi Reyschahi, Iran's top pilgrimage official, told the first batch of departing pilgrims about the "importance of holding the disavowal of the infidels rallies and stressed the need for pilgrims to take part in that Islamic activity."

Iran's ruling clergy say that Haj would not be complete if Muslims were not allowed to express their anger towards what Iran sees as the enemies of Islam, mainly the United States and Israel.

Saudi Arabia's conservative leaders ban any political activity during the Haj to holy sites in the Kingdom.

Iranian pilgrims held a political rally at last year's Haj but it was confined to a big tent inside their compound. There were no reports of trouble with the Saudi security forces then.

Non-Arab Iran's criticism of Saudi Arabia's organisation of the Haj has often been at the centre of a stormy relationship between the two Gulf powers and led to a three-year break in diplomatic ties which ended in 1991.

More than 400 people, mostly Iranians, were killed when Saudi security forces clashed in the 1987 Haj season with an Iranian-led rally, which was chanting death to America and Israel.

The two states disagreed this year over limiting the number of Iranian pilgrims to a quota of around 60,000 while Iran insists on double that number.

Saudi officials say they had allowed Iran to send more than its share in the past three years as a goodwill gesture to make up for Iran's boycott of the ritual when ties were severed and now insists on the 1988 quota system giving each country one pilgrim per every 1,000 Muslim citizens.

Ghoshieh's front urges Arafat not to sign accord

TUNIS (R) — A Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) faction which has been supporting Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat urged him on Monday not to sign the self-rule deal with Israel expected this week.

The Palestine Popular Struggle Front (PPSF), called for urgent meetings of the PLO executive, on which it is represented by its leader Samir Ghoshieh, and the larger Palestine Central Council.

"We in the PPSF... warn the PLO leadership to not submit to any pressure in order to make it sign the draft agreement," it said in a statement.

"Its breaches and defects constitute a dangerous threat to the future of our national struggle and to the remnants of Palestinian national unity within the PLO."

Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin plan to meet in Cairo on Tuesday to settle remaining issues with the aim of signing the deal on Wednesday.

The Palestine Central Council last met in November to approve a declaration of principles signed by Israel and the PLO in Washington in September.



Israeli settlers from the occupied Golan Heights stage a protest on Sunday against government plans to withdraw from the Heights in exchange for peace with Syria (AFP photo)

Israel, PLO geared up for self-rule signing

(Continued from page 1)

of the process. Palestinian members of a joint PLO-Israeli security coordination and cooperation committee were leaving for Gaza on Monday.

Addressing Israeli concerns that Palestinians were not ready to take over, Dr. Shavit said PLO officials would go into the territories Tuesday to coordinate with Israeli officers and 1,000 police would be ready to deploy on Thursday.

"I feel that everything is geared up at top speed towards the implementation of this agreement immediately after the signing on Wednesday," Dr. Shavit told reporters.

He said Palestinians to take charge of civil affairs would be flying to Cairo from various places and then would go into Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho.

"They will all start to flow in as soon as we sign," he said. "If we are delayed a day or two it's not a problem."

It has taken more than six months for the negotiators to agree on details of their Sept. 13 accord calling for limited Palestinian self-rule. Apparently the implementation agreement runs 300 pages, with maps and addenda.

The agreement will end nearly 27 years of occupation in Gaza and Jericho. Under the September accord signed in Washington, the two sides are to begin negotiating a final peace agreement that will decide the future of the rest of the West Bank.

Dr. Shavit said legal aspects of the agreement were cleared up Monday, meaning the key dispute on legal jurisdiction over lawbreakers arrested in Gaza and Jericho was settled.

Some security questions remain, but these could be settled quickly, Dr. Shavit said. He said the agreement on release of Palestinian prisoners was not yet written down but "it's finished, it's all agreed."

The chief Israeli delegate,

Major General Amnon Shashak, returned to Israel at midday on Monday to brief Mr. Rabin, but sources said he could return as early as Monday night.

Egypt announced that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev will deliver speeches at the signing ceremony as representatives of the sponsors of overall Mideast peace talks.

On Sunday, both the PLO Executive Committee and Israel's cabinet approved signing the agreement.

The PLO said a 25-member national council has been named to govern the self-rule zones. It will be headed by Mr. Arafat and include 12 members from the occupied territories and 12 from outside.

Egypt's Middle East News Agency said the members will include Dr. Shavit, Faisal Husseini, a leading Palestinian from the territories, and Intisar Al Wazir (Um Jihad).

Norwegian diplomat Terje Rood Eide, who is coordinating fund-raising efforts, said Monday that money "insufficient to start," has been raised but that more is needed to cover operating costs through the first year of autonomy.

The PLO estimates it will need \$20 million for deployment and operations in the first six weeks, an additional \$40 million over the next five months and \$85 million a year after that.

Last week, the U.S. presented the force with 24 jeeps, the first of 200 jeeps and trucks the United States is donating from its stockpile in Europe.

The vehicles and spare parts have a value of some \$6 million, American diplomats said.

Russia, which cosponsors the Middle East peace process with the United States, is providing armoured vehicles.

The Norwegians have sent 10,000 military fatigues for the police, while the PLO is purchasing navy trousers and blue shirts for the force in Egypt.

Spain is underwriting the

police communications system, the United Kingdom is sending anti-riot equipment, Germany will donate a police academy building and Japan has pledged \$10 million for police housing, the European Union has promised \$11 million in cash and equipment.

Mandela claims poll victory

(Continued from page 1)

friendship and in cooperation."

"I never thought I would see this happen, to see this man go," said one mixed-race woman, crying bitterly.

The mood at ANC election headquarters in the Carlton Hotel in downtown Johannesburg was far more upbeat. Mr. Mandela, wearing a dark suit, danced on stage as hundreds of supporters joined a choir in singing God Bless Africa.

"This is one of the most important moments in the life of our country," he said. "Now is the time for celebration, for South Africans to join together to celebrate the birth of democracy."

The new parliament is to convene in Cape Town on Friday to elect the president, setting the stage for Mr. Mandela to replace Mr. De Klerk as head of state at a formal inauguration ceremony May 10.

Mr. De Klerk is expected to serve as one of two vice presidents. "During the past four years, we have proved that we can work together," Mr. De Klerk

said, referring to the relationship he has nurtured with Mr. Mandela since freeing him from prison four years ago.

"Despite our differences, our relationship has become a symbol of the ability of South Africans from widely different backgrounds to cooperate in the national interest. This spirit will be essential to the success of the government of national unity."

Mr. De Klerk, the product of a traditional Afrikaner family, took office in 1989 and was expected to continue the hard-line policies of his predecessor, P.W. Botha. But he shocked the world by announcing the imminent end of apartheid, and in February 1990 he freed Mr. Mandela from a life prison term for opposing apartheid.

Within months the two men had launched negotiations that led to a new constitution guaranteeing equal rights for blacks and whites and clearing the way for all-race elections.

Voting took place in a mood of national euphoria over four days last week, and the final results from a slow-moving vote count were expected sometime Tuesday.

Palestinians welcome eased rules

(Continued from page 10)

make it easier for Palestinian livelihood," he told the Jordan Times as he was on his way back home. "Jordan provides the lifeline for our people."

Mr. Shawa said that there was no reason for Jordanians to fear that the relaxation of travel into the Kingdom meant that large waves of Palestinians would flock into the country seeking employment and fleeing difficult economic conditions in the occupied territories.

"We will not leave the West Bank and Gaza Strip," he said.

Some Jordanians who advocated limiting the number of Palestinians travelling into Jordan from the occupied territories said they feared massive waves of Palestinian migration if Jordan did not impose stricter measures.

Zaki Abu Yousef, a 23-year-old student at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, said that Palestinians would not leave their homes and businesses to come and settle in the East Bank.

However, he told the Jordan Times as he waited for passport clearance at the arrival terminal, the new relaxed measures would improve Palestinian businesses frequently dealing with Jordan.

"It will become easier to travel between the West and East Bank and will be highly beneficial for our businesses," said Mr. Abu Yousef, whose family business in the West Bank town of Ramallah includes import and export of electrical equipment.

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Israel sets up forts on new Gaza frontline

GUSH KATUF, occupied Gaza Strip (AP) — Bracing for Palestinian autonomy, Israel's army has completed a ring of 13 small outposts around this Jewish enclave of 5,000 settlers in the Gaza Strip.

Sniping has already started, and Captain Aviv is preparing to defend against Palestinian attacks he believes will come once the euphoria of self-rule wears off.

"Everyone hears about the quiet before a storm. That's what it's like now," he said.

The army has pulled back to a new front line — the coils of barbed wire that protect the 12 Jewish settlements in the Gush Katif enclave. There are another four Jewish settlements outside the enclave.

If all goes according to plan, Israel's army will hand off to the Palestinian police within days and end its patrols of Palestinian refugee camps and towns that frequently provoked bloody clashes with Palestinians.

Paratroopers already hold the line of outposts — circular ramparts with concrete pill boxes, canvas tents and a water tower serving as the huffer between the 800,000 Palestinians and the tiny Jewish community in Gaza.

"What happens here will determine whether or not this peace deal will work and if it will continue," said Lieutenant David Remez.

Lt. Remez worried most about the 6,000 Arabs, mostly bedouin farmers, who live in the Jewish enclave. Eventually, they will be under an Israeli-Palestinian control. Lt. Remez fears they may harbour anti-Israeli guerrillas.

Soldiers and commanders alike prefer their new role of guarding Jewish settlements to chasing young Palestinian stone throwers through the streets of Gaza.

Shai Shabatin, guarding a nursery school in the settlement of Neve Dekalim, said his mission was a lot clearer

than it had been when he was patrolling the streets of the Rafah refugee camp.

"This time we are among Jews. It explains why we are here. You live among the settlers and that makes it easier," he said.

But speaking privately, the dislike the soldiers harbour towards the settlers is blunt. "They're a pain in the butt," grumbled one soldier.

Another complained that the cost of protecting so few Israelis was enormous. At the Tel Katifa settlement, four soldiers guard six Israeli adults and two children who built three cement block buildings near the beach.

The soldiers noted settlers and soldiers came to blows after a stabbing attack in Neve Dekalim last week, when two Palestinians stabbed an Israeli woman and then were set upon by vengeance-seeking settlers. Fistfights broke out when a colonel tried to shield one of the Palestinians, who was shot

and beaten and later died.

The soldiers also have to guard against clashes between settlers and Palestinian police.

The potential for such conflict was seen at Neve Dekalim's 10-year anniversary celebration last week, where high school students sang a Hebrew rap song that attacked Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the autonomy plan.

At Capt. Aviv's outpost overlooking the Khan Yunis refugee camp, soldiers were trying out a new volleyball game.

A cry went up as the ball drifted over the eastern rampart and down into the perimeter fence, fully exposed to sniper fire. One soldier stood guard as another slithered down the dune to fetch the ball and scampered back.

"It's ok, they usually just shoot at dawn or at dusk," said Lt. Remez. "It's not very effective. They mostly just shoot and run. But it's very risky."

The Jordanian French Medical Association offer their heartfelt condolences to:
His Majesty King Hussein
Her Majesty Queen Noor
Crown Prince Hassan
Prince Mohammed
Princess Basma
Prince Ra'ed Ben Zaid
(honorary President of the JFMA)
for the sad loss of
Her Majesty Queen Zein Al Sharaf

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Envoys Special
18:00	News in French
19:15	Grands Galop
19:30	News in Hebrew
19:45	Medical Druggs
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Step by Step
20:55	Beyond 2000
21:10	Moore Over Miami
22:00	News in English
22:30	The Cape Rebel
22:45	The Second Half
PRAYER TIMES	
04:22	Fajr
05:46	Dhuhr
12:33	Asr
16:12	Maghrib
19:45	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590	
Church of the Assumption Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terra Nova Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Assumption Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Epiphanius Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 623226	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 654952	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulliten supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Temperatures will rise slightly becoming around average with westerly northerly moderate. In Amman duty weather conditions will prevail with westerly northerly moderate and sea calm.	
Amman	Min/Max temp. 12/24
Aqaba	13/32

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Deserts	8/27
Jordan Valley	8/27
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 21, Aqaba 31, Humidity readings: Amman 25 per cent, Aqaba 18 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Nidal Dahleh	827195
Dr. Bassam Karadsheli	752000
Dr. Mahmoud Hindi	898787
Dr. Mahmoud Omar	888883
First pharmacy	661912
Farid's pharmacy	778336
Al-Salam pharmacy	637055
Neirosh pharmacy	623672
Al-Salam pharmacy	636230
Yacoub pharmacy	644443
Shameini pharmacy	637660
Neirosh pharmacy	623672
Najib pharmacy	947632
REDS:	
Dr. Mohammed Hila	279773
Al-Quds pharmacy	(-)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Walid Halash	982799
Khalifa pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630441
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843422
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Prison Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	897467
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	787111
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	661101
(directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	623101
Reprints	661101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	773111
Jordan Television	774111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	636381
Company	08-53200
RJ Flight Information	08-53200
Onion Alfa Intl. Airport	08-53200
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalifa Maternity, J. Amn.	644281/6
Al-Quds Maternity, J. Amn.	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmeisani	664171/4
Shameini Hospital	669131
University Hospital	843045
Al-Munshar Hospital	667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali	664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajirin	771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	775112/8
Army, Marka	891611/5
Querra Alfa Hospital	686100
Anal Hospital	674155
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)98323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)90560
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al-Hikmah Modern Hospital	(09)989090
Princess Beaza Hospital	(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)727275
Ibn Al-Nafes Hospital	(02)947100
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(03)314111
FOR THE TRAVELLER	
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53300-5, where it should always be verified.	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
04:10	Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
08:00	Damascus (RJ)
08:30	Dhahran (RJ)
09:15	Amman (RJ)
09:45	Amman (RJ)
10:35	Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
11:30	Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
17:35	Vienna (RJ)
17:55	Damascus (RJ)
18:00	Cairo (RJ)
18:30	Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
04:20	Vienna (OS)
07:50	Rome (AZ)
08:30	Paris, Beirut (AF)
21:15	Aden (IY)
21:25	Beirut (ME)
09:30	Amsterdam (KL)
09:30	Bucharest (RO)
DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
07:00	Amman (RJ)
07:15	Frankfurt (RJ)
08:30	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:45	Paris, Madrid (RJ)
13:45	Cairo (RJ)
15:55	London (RJ)
21:00	Larnaca (RJ)
21:30	Jeddah (RJ)
22:30	Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:50	Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
10:20	Rome (AZ)
13:50	Vienna (OS)
18:00	Damascus (AZ)
22:00	Aden (IY)
08:30	Amsterdam (KL)
01:55	Bucharest (RO)
RAJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN	
Dep. Amman: 8:00 a.m. every Monday	
Arr. Damascus: 5:00 p.m. every Monday	
Dep. Amman: 7:30 a.m. every Sunday	
Arr. Damascus: 5:00 p.m. every Sunday	
MARKET PRICES	
Upper/lower price in fil per kg.	
Apple	550/650
Banana	600
Banana (Mikammar)	600
Cabbage	160/200
Carrot	220/200

King receives condolences

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein received a cable of condolences from South Korean President Kim Young Sam over the passing of Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother, who died at the age of 78 on April 26.

King Hussein received more cables of condolences from heads of state and political figures in Arab and foreign countries Sunday and Monday. The cables were sent by Senegalese President Abdou Diouf, Eritrean President Assaf Afewerki, Portuguese President Mario Soares, Congo Prime Minister Pascal Lissouba, Syrian Prime Minister Mahmoud Al Zubi, United Arab Emirates Defence Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Hamad Al Thani, Sheikh Sultan Ben Hassan Al Thani, Egyptian writer Mohammad Hassanain Heikal, Pope Shouada III of Alexandria, former speaker of the Lebanese parliament Kamel Al Assad, Mother Theresa, Saudi Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz Al Saud, the

son of the Bahraini crown prince, Sheikh Salman Ben Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifah, former Sudanese president Abdul Rahman Swaroudah, Bahraini Monetary Corporation Director Sheikh Khaled Ben Salmen Al Khalifah, Secretary General of the Arab Thought Forum (ATF) Ali Oumil, head of the Syrian Druze sect Ahmad Al Hajri, Omani Labour Minister Ahmad Ben Mohammad Al Aisa'i, and Lebanese Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Anwar Al Khalil.

deputies, the House endorsed both articles as recommended by its Financial Committee.

The committee recommended that lists should be part of the law and not be governed by a special regulation.

The House also endorsed Article 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12 of the draft law.

The House will continue debate of other articles today.

House reconsiders articles in draft sales tax law

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Monday reconsidered Article 5 and 6 of the sales tax draft law, which it endorsed last week, with a view to correcting a legal wrangle arising from voting down the Financial Committee's recommendation to amend Item B of Article 6 to have items exempted from the tax included in the law.

Item B of Article 6 as presented by the government and

approved by the House last week does not refer to any lists attached to the law and gives the government the right to specify the exempted items through regulations, thus contradicting Article 5 of the draft law which imposes taxes on goods and services except those exempted by the lists attached to the draft law.

After a lengthy debate on the two articles, involving many

deputies, the House endorsed both articles as recommended by its Financial Committee.

The committee recommended that lists should be part of the law and not be governed by a special regulation.

The House also endorsed Article 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12 of the draft law.

The House will continue debate of other articles today.

Palestinians queue up to reclaim documents

New travel regulations welcomed with 'great relief'

By Natasha Bukhari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Tens of eager Palestinians queued outside the Department of Control and Inspection (DCI) to reclaim their documents which were previously seized by the department to guarantee their return to the West Bank, following an announcement by Minister of Interior Salameh Hamad easing restrictions on the entry of Palestinians to Jordan.

"Things have become much easier for both visitors and residents," said one Palestinian who was waiting to take his passport from the DCI.

Under the new regulations, travellers coming to Jordan across the bridges on the Jordan River will not have their documents impounded provided they hold open or

restricted Israeli permits.

According to the previous regulations, entry into the Kingdom was only possible if visitors obtained permits from the Department and those permits were valid for only one month.

In addition, Palestinian visitors' documents were held by the DCI to ensure that these visitors did not remain in the country longer than the one month permitted.

"Now we can stay here for as long as we wish, thanks to Jordanians' generosity, for which we are really grateful," said Ahmad, who told the Jordan Times that he had been returned to the West Bank last year by the Control and Inspection Department because he stayed in the Kingdom for more than one month. "Now, I do not even have to worry about technical details; I can come and go as

I please," he added.

The new regulations stipulate that people aged 26 to 36 will be allowed into the Kingdom as long as they hold open Israeli permits for travel, and will be permitted to stay for as long they like provided they retain valid return permits.

One Palestinian woman told the Jordan Times that she was enrolling her 9-year-old son in a school in Amman, saying that the boy had for a long time wanted to go to the same school as his cousins. "It is a dream come true for my son," she added.

Under the new regulations, which became effective May 1, 1994, students from the occupied West Bank will be allowed to enter Jordanian schools if one of their parents does not have a family reunion permit from the Israeli authorities. Students whose

parents carry the yellow permit cards, documents held by Palestinians who reside in Jordan, can join any school in the Kingdom.

Previous regulations did not enable Palestinian residents who do not carry a Jordanian passport to enroll in the Kingdom's schools.

Officials at the Ministry of Interior have described the new set of regulations as a complete turn over which gives Palestinians, residents of Jordan as well as those who are visitors, unrestricted freedoms.

Regulations also give Palestinians the chance to renew their reunion permits annually from Jordan as opposed to the old regulations by which reunion permits were only obtained from the West Bank.

These new regulations will facilitate procedures for

Palestinian residents in the country as well as for Palestinian visitors, in terms of obtaining official permits from the Jordanian authorities.

They also secure schooling for many Palestinian students who previously have been denied access to academic institutions in the country.

A senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official, who did not wish to be named, told the Jordan Times Monday that the new regulations have been received by Palestinian leaders as well as West Bankers with a sense of "great relief." He added that this "move" will enhance the "special brotherly" relations between the Palestinians and Jordanians, which in turn, will have a positive effect on shaping the two countries' relations in the present progressive stage.

Fatal Madaba road collision under investigation — police

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Fifteen survivors of a fatal bus collision that claimed the lives of ten people Sunday on the Amman-Madaba road, were listed in fair to serious condition Monday. Some accident victims were transferred to King Hussein Medical Centre in Amman, hospital sources said.

Minister of Interior Salameh Hamad, who Monday addressed a ceremony marking International Traffic Day, said "despite all efforts yesterday, we were shocked by a tragic accident which claimed the lives of ten people and left 15 more injured."

In a statement Sunday evening to Jordan Television (JTV), the minister attributed the accident to reckless driving.

Statements by witnesses and victims, which are yet unconfirmed by police, said the driver of a water tanker attempted to overtake a passenger vehicle on the two-lane road and met head-on with a public bus. The accident took place in the Manga area near Madaba.

Two of the deceased who were brought to Madaba's Nadim Hospital, have not yet been identified, hospital sources said.

The bus driver, who survived the crash, and another passenger were transferred from Nadim Hospital to King Hussein Medical Centre.

A Public Security Department

official (PSD) official in Amman said Madaba police were still investigating the accident.

The dead include: Suleiman M. Salayeh (50), Mahmoud Jubaili (50), Taleh Mistleh (35), Abdul Aziz Ahmad, Awatef Mahmoud, Samar Hmoud and four others, including the two women and one child who have not been identified.

According to officials at Bashir Hospital, three victims were admitted there on Sunday; a six-year-old, Mariam Hassan, suffered a fractured arm and thigh and was listed in good condition. The other two patients were transferred to King Hussein Medical Centre.

A Madaba Military Hospital official told the Jordan Times that most casualties admitted there were listed in fair condition. He added that a 50-year-old man suffered internal bleeding and will undergo surgery today.

His Majesty King Hussein instructed the Minister of Interior and the PSD officials concerned to insure that the accident victims receive appropriate care, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan conveyed their condolences to the victims' families, Petra reported.

Stressing the importance of road safety, Mr. Hamad told the attendees of the International Traffic Day ceremony that the number of road accidents in the Kingdom is in-

creasing, and the death rate among road accident victims is 15.8 to every 10,000 motor vehicles, while in the industrialised countries it is 1.8 to every 10,000 vehicles.

Petra recently reported that during the first three months of this year, a total of 6,842 road accidents occurred in Jordan, resulting in the death of 90 people and injury to 2,844 others.

The Traffic Department, which released the numbers attributed most accidents to speeding and disobeying traffic rules and regulations.

According to the Department of Statistics, in 1993 road accidents took the lives of 440 people; 61.2 per cent of them were children under the age of 15.

Experts to review nautical charting

AMMAN (J.T.) — Since most trade in the Western Asia region is conducted through maritime transport, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is organising an expert group meeting with the aim of developing and improving maritime transport in the region, ESCWA said in a press release Monday.

Jointly organised with the International Hydrographic Bureau (IHB), the ad hoc expert group meeting on maritime hydrographic surveying and nautical charting will take place in Amman and Aqaba between May 8 and 12.

The opening and closing sessions will be held in close cooperation with the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre at the centre's headquarters in Amman May 8 and 12. The technical meetings and live demonstrations at sea will be held in Aqaba May 9 to 11.

Several countries in the ESCWA region have been ranked among the lowest in the

world with regard to hydrographic and charting capabilities. These capabilities are crucial, as hydrographic data and updated nautical charts are considered essential elements in the development of a nation's infrastructure, involving not only port and maritime transport but also the exploitation resources and the protection of marine ecology.

Surveying and charting are also essential for proper planning of port development and construction of new ports.

The meeting will discuss possibilities for improving the status of maritime hydrographic surveying, nautical charting and maintenance of hydrographic surveying in the ESCWA region covering 13 Arab countries in Western Asia. It will also review the recommendations and conclusions of a study conducted by ESCWA and the IHB in this regard, and will establish the foundations for future regional action to be undertaken by ESCWA member countries.



VISITING SAHAB: Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Monday visits the Industrial Cities Corporation in Sahab, south of Amman. Dr. Majali said that through the decentralisation process the government will work on moving the decision-makers to the country's cities and governorates in a bid to encourage investments in various parts of Jordan. The prime minister also met with corporation Director General Fayed Saheimat, Corporation officials and

several members of the Jordanian Investors Society. The premier stressed at the meeting the government's keenness to provide the corporation with the needed communications facilities to enable industrialists to carry out their work under the best conditions. After a tour of several industries at the Sahab Industrial City, Dr. Majali expressed his pride in the Jordanian industrial sector and called for maintaining the good quality of these industries (Petra photo)

Agro-industrial exhibition to open

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Union for Agricultural Materials, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, today opens an agro-industrial exhibition at the International Fairs Centre in Amman.

A ministry statement said that the exhibition, in which 51 companies will take part, will display farming equipment and supplies such as drip irrigation systems, plastic covers, veter-

inary medicines and dairy processing products, in addition to fertilisers and pesticides.

The six-day exhibition, which will be held under the theme "technological development and public safety," aims at orienting the public on the different forms of technology used in agricultural production and guiding farmers in the proper and safe use of farm equipment.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

- ★ Film in Spanish entitled "Beltinebras" at the Spanish Cultural Centre on Monday at 6:30 (Tel 613077).

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture in Arabic on Arab capabilities after the collapse of the Soviet Union by Mr. Abdullah Al Ahamar, member of the Syrian National Progressive Front, at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by five Egyptian artists at Darat Al Fannan of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Lawehdeh. Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 56 Arab contemporary artists (Tel. 643251/2).
- ★ Exhibition by artist Mohammad Muhraddin at Ab'ad Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition by artist Helmi El-Touni at Baladna Art Gallery. (Tel. 687598).
- ★ Exhibition by artists Dr. Ali Ghoul, Hussein Da'seh, Adnan Al Sharif, Abdul Hussein Tawaji, Salman Abbas, and Hafez Al Droubi at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).
- ★ Jordanian-Iraqi contemporary exhibition by over 80 artists at Ain Art Gallery in Wadi Saqra (9:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 644451).

وزارة الاشغال العام والاسكان

دائرة العطاءات الحكومية

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS & HOUSING
GOVERNMENT TENDERS DIRECTORATE

Invitation For Bids

Suit Water & Waste Water Project

Contracts 46/94/C1/Central, 47/94/C2/Central, 48/94/C3/Central and 49/94/C4/Central

1. The Water Authority of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation through the Ministry of Public Works and Housing/ Government Tenders Directorate, invites experienced foreign contractors from countries which meet the eligibility criteria of the European Investment Bank and local contractors who have been prequalified by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing as First Grade in Water and Sewerage for contracts C1, C2 and C4 and first Grade in Water and Sewerage and First and Second Grade in Electromechanical for contract C3, or a joint venture of the above, as appropriate, between foreign and local contractors to submit their offers for the supply, delivery and construction of the Suit Water Distribution System, Pumping Stations, Reservoirs and Wastewater Project. Foreign contractors are strongly encouraged to joint venture or associate with the above graded local contractors.
2. The contracts comprise the following main works:
 - Supply and installation of water supply pipes, diameter varying from 19mm to 500mm, total length about 430km, supply, construction and installation of 3 pumping stations with capacities ranging between 50m³/hr and 800m³/hr, construction of 8 service reservoirs with volumes of 100m³ to 3,000m³.
 - Supply and installation of about 17km of sewers with diameters ranging from 150mm to 300mm.
3. Tender documents are available as of Tuesday, May 3rd, 1994 and may be examined and purchased at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing Government Tenders Directorate, Amman - Jordan, P.O.Box (1220), Fax: (606751).
4. The non-refundable fee for each set of tender documents will be JD 500 each for contracts C1, C2 and C3 and JD 200 for contracts C4.
5. The latest date for purchase of tender documents by eligible bidders is Thursday, June 9th, 1994.
6. Bids are due not later than 1200 hours, Jordan local time, on Saturday, June 18th, 1994, to the office of the Government Tenders Directorate.
7. Foreign contractors shall complete the qualification questionnaire supplied with the tender documents. Bids, will have to be submitted in two separate and sealed envelopes marked "Technical/Suit" and "Financial/Suit" both sealed in one envelope marked "Suit Water and Wastewater Project". On the date set for bid submission and opening, only the "Technical/Suit" envelope will be opened. When the evaluation process is completed, both qualified and disqualified contractors will be notified of the results as well as of the date set for opening financial offers.
8. Ultimate consideration for the award of contract will be given to the lowest overall evaluated bid price of all substantially responsive bids submitted by eligible and qualified contractors.

Eng. Bashir Jaghbeer
Chairman/Central Tenders Committee
General Director/Government Tenders Directorate

Opening Soon

All you look for and a little bit more

Eng. Bashir Jaghbeer
Chairman/Central Tenders Committee
General Director/Government Tenders Directorate

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

الصحف الأردنية المستقلة المنشورة بالإنجليزية من قبل المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. تأسست 1975.

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Shuttle can work

SYRIA'S PUBLIC rejection of the latest Israeli peace plan envisaging a phased withdrawal from the Golan Heights should have been expected, given that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher carried the plan to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad Saturday with probably no more hope than that of Damascus submitting a counter offer based on Syria's long-standing position calling for complete and simultaneous Israeli withdrawal.

No doubt that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's latest formula for peace with Syria was made with the full realisation that the Syrian government was not likely to take his offer as is. Negotiating tactics take into considerations the principles of offering the minimum and demanding the maximum. This is exactly what Rabin has done in his latest move with Damascus.

Rabin had been showing some flexibility on the Golan Heights, with promise of territorial concessions and the dismantlement of Jewish settlements. Still, previous Israeli postures on the Syrian territories whether they emanated from the Labour or Likud perspectives appear to have prevented Rabin from meeting Syrian legitimate demands in full.

It is against this backdrop, that the Syrian no was anticipated. "Damascus rejects half-solutions and does not accept any compromises over Arab rights and land," Damascus Radio declared on the eve of Christopher's visit to the country. Of course, the Syrian president can afford to be patient in his dealing with Israel since he has more to offer than to receive. With the prospects of another war in the area receding to an all-time low, regaining lost territories cannot compensate for the kind of historic concessions that Damascus is called upon to make. No wonder then that President Assad had to sound firm and unequivocal in demanding full Israeli withdrawal or nothing.

In line with these latest developments, the U.S. secretary of state has travelled once again to Israel carrying with him the official Syrian reply. While it is premature to tell how Rabin will react to Damascus's counter proposal, it is probable that he will improve on his Saturday's negotiating offer to keep the U.S. shuttle diplomacy in full swing. The minute Christopher abandons his go-between activities, the road would know that the Syrian-Israeli track is at least temporarily blocked. This may not be the cards since the gap between a phased Israeli withdrawal and full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan is indeed bridgeable.

Bridging the gap can be done the minute Rabin becomes convinced that Damascus is firm on meeting its full conditions for peace in the area.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A bit to reassert the principle that peace is indivisible, Syria has rejected an Israeli offer of gradual Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, said Al-Dustour daily. There can be no peace without the exchange for land as the Arabs in general and Syria in particular believe and Israel's manoeuvres are totally rejected, said the daily. For peace to be lasting, it should be complete and just. Partial deals can never achieve the desired goals for the Arabs, added the daily. Indeed, President Hafez Al Assad's firm position regarding this issue has given the Palestinian cause and the question of peace a pan-Arab and comprehensive dimension and further exposed Israel's underhand dealings and procrastinations, said the paper. It said that the Oslo deal on Israeli-Palestinian gradual peace was perhaps necessary in view of the complex situation in the occupied Palestinian land, but that does not mean that the Israelis can repeat the same pattern with the other Arab parties. The Syrians want the Israelis to withdraw their forces completely from the Golan as they did in Sinai and there is no doubt that Jordan and Lebanon would make the same demands so that peace can be genuine and lasting, the paper continued. Syria, Jordan and Lebanon are determined, said the paper, to reject partial solutions, and the leaderships of the three countries have time and again reiterated their positions clearly and reaffirmed their principled stands even before the Madrid conference was held.

COMMENTING ON the same theme, Arafat Hijazi, a columnist in Sawt Al Shabab daily, said that by offering to withdraw from the Golan piecemeal, the Israelis are aiming at achieving a separate peace with Damascus and luring Syria away from the Palestine question. The writer said that Israeli leaders and settlers have often expressed Israel's desire to retain the Golan under any circumstances and therefore the latest Israeli offer can only be a new manoeuvre designed to mislead public opinion.

The View from Fourth Circle

Jordan, Palestine and Israel: challenge and opportunity

By Rami G. Khouri

THE SIGNING of the Palestinian-Israeli economic accord last week and this week's scheduled signing of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement to implement the first stage of the Palestinian self-governing authority represent a phenomenon that is really historic — but not for the reasons most people give. The importance of these accords (along with the Jordanian-Israeli negotiating agenda and the Jordanian-Palestinian economic and security accords that were signed in recent months) lies not in the advent of Arabs and Jews living together in peace, because they have long lived in peace in most historical periods. Their importance lies in the fact that for the first time in modern history these three peoples — Palestinians, Jordanians and Israelis — are working out arrangements for coexistence and mutual national development on their own, based on their self-perceived national interests, without the imposition of territorial, political or economic arrangements by outside powers. I would suggest several phenomena that we should keep in mind as the process unfolds, relating to the past, the present and the future.

1. The past: Despite the emotional passion and legal status that define them, Jordan, Palestine and Israel are three small entities that have little historical precedent as independent, sovereign states. A Jewish state existed for about a century, and assorted Ammonite, Edomite and Moabite trans-Jordanian kingdoms existed for several centuries some 3,000 years ago, in the Iron Age; in all other historical eras, these territories existed as provinces or protectorates of larger, usually imperial, entities, such as Assyria, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, Persia and the Islamic and Ottoman empires.

Ancient history clearly suggests — in fact, it dictates — that attempts by these three small territories to develop as separate nations, detached from their broader Middle Eastern hinterland and dependent on foreign political and economic support, are unlikely to last more than a few generations. Modern history, however, indicates equally emphatically that Jordan, Palestine and Israel are real units that have to be dealt with as independent actors in the Middle Eastern game of nations. History is a powerful guide, but history is not a static determinant of identity, borders or inter-state relationships. The fact is that the forces of modern 20th century history have given birth to the national ideas of Jordan, Palestine and Israel. Furthermore, these three entities have responded to modern history by earning their place in the contemporary community of Levantine nations. Jordan, Palestine and Israel have not only worked hard to survive and to improve their people's standards of living; each, in its own way, has also earned the respect, the support and even the admiration of the rest of the world. We can now leave behind the argument that has been used by and against all three entities: that they never existed in history, and therefore they have no legitimacy in the 20th century.

2. The present: Jordan, Palestine and Israel are all characterised by small populations and domestic markets; substantial dependence on external financing; serious imbalances in their natural resources; problems of poverty and unemployment; residence in a volatile and violent region and an ongoing attempt to forge stable political systems that satisfy their complex demographic mix. As such, they collectively reflect

the national pressures and constraints that define the entire Middle East. I believe that all three embarked on the route of diplomatic negotiations and mutual recognition as the most appropriate means of addressing their national predicaments when they recognised simultaneously in the early 1990s that their present national condition was untenable, for their economic, political and military dependencies were unsustainable in the long run.

The challenge they face is not only to recognise each other and to coexist in peace, but also to sort out the deeply intertwined demographic, economic and political relationships that have defined them for most of this century. Demographically and politically, the Palestinians are structurally meshed with both Jordan and Israel, but all three parties have traditionally suffered from suspicions and the perception of predatory dangers emanating from the others. Economically and environmentally (especially in terms of water, communications, labour, and markets) the Palestinians, Israelis and Jordanians form a single unit that can be separated only at the expense of the long-term national development of each of its three sub-divisions, and with the certitude of perpetual yet fickle dependence on foreign supporters, financiers, armours, protectors and guardians.

Jordanians, Palestinians and Israelis stand on the threshold not only of their own future, but perhaps also of the future of others around the world who seek signs of equitable and democratic national development and productive regional integration, free of the debilitating constraints that have defined much of the South in the last several hundred years.

The task now is how to differentiate between the modern historical national identities and political rights of each of these three communities, while affirming the ancient historical forces that always compelled the three to work together as an integrated unit in order to maximise their viability and to assure a decent standard of living for their people. The signing of the economic, political and security accords that we have witnessed in recent weeks and months represents a serious attempt to achieve precisely this — to affirm independent national identities and rights to Jordan, Palestine and Israel, while promoting economic integration and collective regional growth and prosperity.

3. The future: The future welfare of Jordanians, Israelis and Palestinians will reflect their ability to emerge from this peace-making transitional interlude positioned in a manner that allows them to a) alleviate their contemporary material and economic constraints, b) reconcile their complex demographic mesh, c) affirm their distinct political and national

identities, and d) build on their proven individual strengths to assure their collective future stability and progress.

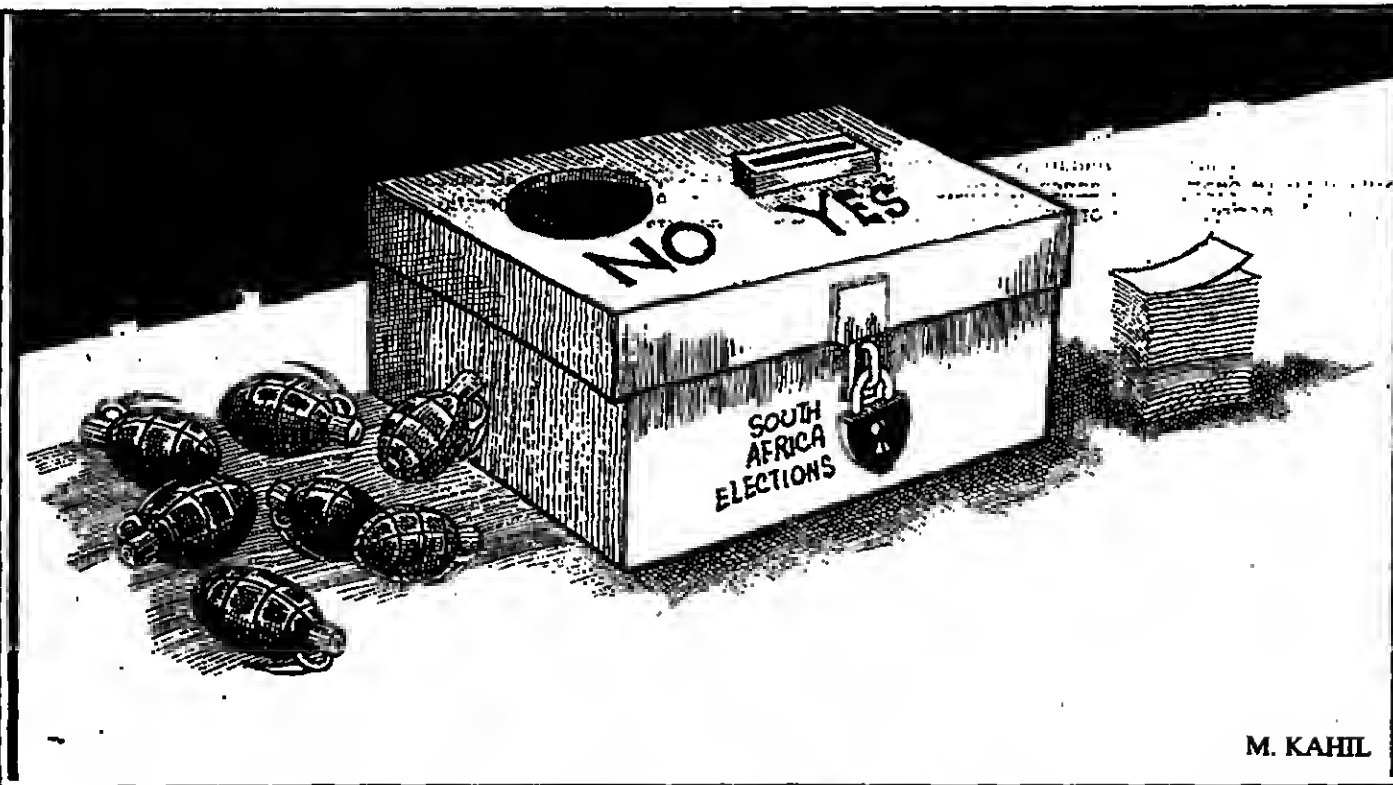
A Jordanian-Palestinian confederation is a realistic accommodation to contemporary political realities; it could also be the first step towards a broader, more logical national reconfiguration of a Levantine region of Semites — Arabs and Israelis — who have been plagued this century with national fragmentation, socio-economic distress and embarrassing foreign dependency. A Jordanian-Palestinian confederation will have close economic ties with Israel and with larger neighbours such as Syria, Iraq, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula.

A Jordanian-Palestinian confederation in the short term, and a possible Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli trilateral, Benelux-type association in the longer run, would be well placed to prosper and to generate further international respect and support, because of the impressive attributes that these three entities enjoy: a strategic geographic location that augurs well for trade, tourism and transit traffic; a skilled and educated workforce, with a proven private sector component; strong political and economic support from the rest of the world; relatively balanced economies that are not heavily dependent on a single sector; a young but nevertheless serious commitment to democracy, pluralism and human rights; and, perhaps most importantly, a shared modern experience of challenging, often suffering, statehood — one that should prompt their people and governments in the future to honour humanism, participatory decision-making and regional socio-economic integration as the defining values of their political culture and economic systems.

A Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli combine can provide a realistic, durable model of trans-national socio-economic integration as the antidote to narrow, simplistic, made-in-Europe post-1920 nationalisms. They can provide an honourable democratic alternative to the Middle East's modern state legacy of militarism, autocracy and authoritarianism. They can provide a fresh, moving, living formula for ethnic and religious pluralism and tolerance in a region that has been wracked by imperial manipulation, fearful tribalism and religious extremism.

The 20th century has confined us to an intellectually, politically and spiritually insulating debate about small pieces of land, micro-populations, and blinkered visions of the future. What European colonialism and post-colonial American electoral frenzy and predatory commercial extravaganzas have torn asunder, we have an opportunity to put back together again at this important historical juncture of Levantine transformation and rebirth. This time, however, unlike 1920 and 1948, we face the critical challenge and the opportunity to engage in the process of nation-building and statecraft in a more coherent, merciful and meaningful manner — most importantly, by consulting the people whose destinies will be determined by the diplomatic negotiations underway today.

Jordanians, Palestinians and Israelis stand on the threshold not only of their own future, but perhaps also of the future of others around the world who seek signs of equitable and democratic national development and productive regional integration, free of the debilitating constraints that have defined much of the South in the last several hundred years.



M. KAHIL

The lessons from South Africa

By G.H. Jansen

APART FROM the broad, basic similarities between the two racialist states, apartheid South Africa and the Jewish state of Israel, there are both similarities and differences in the way in which they are, at long last, transferring power to those whom they have ruled — the blacks and the Palestinians; the Israelis, of course, being the counterparts of the South African whites.

Because of the basic similarities in their geo-political situation, there was, over the years, close and cordial, but covert, relations between Israel and South Africa; covert because of world disapproval of apartheid. But some things could not be hidden, such as the coming and goings between the Jewish state and the wealthy pro-Zionist South African Jewish community, trade ties despite an international boycott against South Africa and the fact that South African airways regularly plied the route to Israel. There has been strong suspicion that the two countries cooperated in the nuclear field but firm evidence of this has been difficult to find.

When South Africa saw that it had to yield, somewhat, to external pressure it did so by creating black "homelands", or Bantustans, within South Africa. In these homelands, the world was told, blacks would "run their own affairs." Those very same words are being used to put a gloss on two Palestinian Bantustans, in Gaza and Jericho, which are coming into being at this moment,

thanks to the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) acceptance of the Oslo accord.

Indeed the Palestinians have made no bones about describing Gaza-Jericho as "Bantustans", while Israel refers to them as "autonomous" areas or areas of "limited self-rule."

Though the Israelis would like to make this first step the last step too and to yield nothing more, there is no question that Gaza-Jericho First is definitely not the final solution. On the other hand, South Africa fooled itself, and tried to fool the world, that the Bantustan formula was the final solution, because the use of the permanent-sounding word "homelands". But the world was not fooled by the Bantustans and that word acquired a pejorative, contemptuous overtone.

Things are very similar in the case of Gaza and Jericho. After an initial burst of completely artificial euphoria, in which the Arabs and Palestinians shared, most of the Palestinians and many Arabs have now woken up to the fact that Gaza-Jericho is a snare and a delusion: but not the pro-Western Arabs, like Egypt and the Gulf states, nor the Western countries and the pro-Western allies, like Turkey and Japan.

The West persists in seeing Gaza-Jericho as a great, peaceful achievement for which someone may yet win a Nobel Peace prize.

South Africa was brought to its senses by long-term consistent pressure from its Western friends and trading partners. On the other hand,

because the PLO has conferred respectability on Israel, particularly through the Rabin-Arafat handshake, the West, as in the past, is not applying any pressure on Israel to implement numerous U.N. resolutions telling it to leave occupied Arab territory. Indeed, Israel's ties with the outside world are presently being strengthened; as with the Vatican.

Instead, the West is putting pressure, not on Israel, but on the Arabs to lift even the minimal boycott that they have been applying on the Jewish state.

And while the sanctions against South Africa were eventually lifted, it was at the request of the blacks because the whites had begun, seriously, to dismantle the structure of apartheid. The West is asking the Arabs to cancel their boycott at the very time when Israel is strengthening its version of apartheid through continuing and tightening its "closure" of the West Bank and Gaza from Israel "proper." It imposed this closure after the Hebron mosque massacre. The pretext for the closure is to give security to the Israelis, the whites, from so-called "terrorist" attacks by the Palestinians, the blacks.

But the result has been to produce a divided, segregated society indistinguishable from that of apartheid South Africa. Instead of the hated South African passbook, the Palestinians have to have separate passes for any sort of movement, especially for work, between the closed-off area and Israel and East Jerusalem, the Palestinian capital.

Just as in South Africa, even those persons licensed to work in the white-Israeli area, can only be there during the day and have to take themselves out at night. As in South Africa, workers have to spend many hours each day travelling to and from their separate and safely far-distant homes and their places of work.

The Bantustans were really seen by the South African whites as the final solution of their racial problem. They have not lasted and the whole system collapsed almost immediately after the apartheid structure was removed. As its name denotes, Gaza-Jericho First is seen, by the Palestinians, as only an intermediate stage to something more comprehensive — but, the Israelis insist, not to an independent Palestinian state, which is the only thing the Palestinians really want.

The Israeli Bantustans, therefore, are in an awkward position. They confer a degree of self-rule that should, supposedly, satisfy and stave off the Palestinian desire for independence. As a long-term substitute for independence Gaza-Jericho First will not work any more than the Bantustans staved off one-man one-vote democracy in South Africa. Indeed what is happening in South Africa should teach the Israelis that clear and simple lesson. But it is a lesson that the Israelis will never learn because of their Zionist belief that their "Promised Land" was promised to the Jews and only to them. They show no sign of being prepared to share it — not even with the original inhabitants.

LETTERS

Can we remarket Arabism?

To the Editor:

WHERE DID we go wrong? The 60s generation, the bright eyed young Arab intellectuals now in their late forties and fifties — All bright, many highly successful, all unhappy with the state of affairs.

Perhaps at no other time than now has the need for cool-headed, measured thinking been more needed. Arabism, that sense of identity, is being threatened, to a point where perhaps a hundred years from now the word Arab will be relegated to history. The Arab World is now the "Middle East." Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt are the "Eastern Mediterranean region." Others are the Mediterranean Basin or North Africa. Our national dishes are either Greek, Turkish, or even "national Israeli" dishes. In time, we are slowly being robbed of anything and everything that makes us feel what we are. Worse of all, each of us is content or even fighting hard to be packaged as either a Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Jordanian, Egyptian or Palestinian, with no sense of historic depth which would make us realise that these are but newly created identities that are less than 50 years old. Just a bunch of ill-defined small enclaves with no sense or hope for survival.

The old Arabists were idealistic to the point of being naive. They underestimated the forces of those who are threatened by Arab nationalism. Any of us would have laughed at anyone suggesting that it would be possible for Arabs to fight each other and not Israel 20 years on. Worse still, any of us would have thought it unthinkable that we even consider removing the embargo against Israel while thoroughly choking almost to the point of extinction another Arab nation.

Selling Arabism again needs knowledge of market tactics and understanding the strength of the media in shaping the attitudes of the Arab masses. It needs a breed of committed realists who still feel the dream worthwhile. Funny enough, even as a business venture, Arabism would be highly successful. Would anyone care to invest?

Najwa Khuri-Bulos M.D.,
Professor of Pediatrics,
Jordan University Hospital,
Amman.

Job well done

To the Editor:

REFERRING TO the recent fire in the Amman Forte Grand hotel, in which I was staying at the time, I would like to thank the staff and public services for their prompt action in putting out the fire, as well as the rescue work and clearance of smoke, which enabled me to leave my room on the third floor.

I would also like to thank the hospitality of the Marriott Hotel, which provided refreshment and breakfast for those evacuated.

Dennis Goodwin,
Kendal, England

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Features

France and Britain hope tunnel holds vision of the future

By Paul Taylor
Reuters

PARIS — For Franco-British relations, the outlook might be described as tunnel at the end of the light.

The official inauguration of the Channel Tunnel on May 6, creating a land link between Britain and continental Europe for the first time since the last Ice Age, ought to be a landmark event opening a new era in relations.

Queen Elizabeth and President Francois Mitterrand will open the tunnel at ceremonies in Calais and Folkestone and travel through it in a train carrying the royal Rolls-Royce.

Because of technical delays, the massively over-budget rail link will not open on schedule for freight or passengers.

The operators have announced that passenger traffic will begin only after the summer holiday season.

The opening of the tunnel symbolises the false starts that have characterised a relationship sealed in 1904 as the Entente Cordiale but which is often neither cordial nor an entente.

Since World War II, Franco-British relations have hobbled from one new dawn to another without ever shaking off the rivalry, mutual suspicion and difference of purpose that made the two countries hereditary enemies for centuries.

In spite of the forthcoming celebration of the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings, the turning point against Nazi Germany in World War II, it is sometimes hard to imagine that Britain and France were allies in two world wars and are partners in NATO, the U.N. Security

Council and the European Union.

The French still tend to see "the Anglo-Saxons," a term that refers to both Britain and the United States, as their main adversaries in finance, trade and European integration — and as a permanent threat to their language.

The British tend to see the French as trying to drag them into a centralised, over-regulated, spendthrift Europe and drive a wedge between them and the United States.

Officials on both sides acknowledge France still looks instinctively to Germany as its favoured partner, while Britain looks to Washington — and often Bonn — before Paris.

Twelve million visitors cross the channel each year without the tunnel, but old resentments lurk just below the surface.

The slightest fishing dispute is enough to set British ministers invoking the Hundred Years War, a period of almost incessant battles between the two countries that began in the mid-14th century.

Britain's popular press gleefully seizes on any excuse for "frog bashing," an attitude encouraged at times in the 1980s by the Eurosceptical government of Margaret Thatcher.

Some Britons believe General Charles de Gaulle, who launched his call to resist the Nazi occupation of France from exile in London, betrayed his World War II allies by twice slamming the door to the European economic community in Britain's face — in 1963 and 1967.

War-time British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill

once joked of the Gaulish emblem of free France: "We all have our crosses to bear, mine is the cross of Lorraine."

The general later explained his move in keeping Britain out by saying it was "an island entirely surrounded by water."

Just before Britain finally joined in 1973, the queen said in a celebrated speech in France: "While it is true that we do not drive on the same side of the road, it is also true that we are going in the same direction."

Two decades later, many French people doubt that. Thatcher's epic battles for budget rebates and against closer European integration left a bitter taste.

Foreign affairs commentator Jacques Julliard of the weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur* speaks for many Frenchmen when he argues that it was a mistake to let Britain into the European Union because the British are fundamentally anti-European.

Hopes rose in Paris when Thatcher was removed in 1990 that her successor, John Major, who took office vowing that Britain wanted to be at the heart of Europe, would usher in a period of closer cooperation.

In spite of their comradeship in arms in the Gulf War and in Bosnia, the French were soon disillusioned. Officials privately see Major as too weak or too much a prisoner of EU critics in his party to pursue European integration positively.

A fight over EU voting rules illustrated how far apart they remain.

Nevertheless, both governments seem intent on using this Franco-British spring to

show that their relationship, as Mark Twain once wrote of Wagner's music, is not as bad as it sounds.

A brochure called "The Entente Cordiale Today", jointly produced by the two foreign ministries to mark this month's 90th anniversary of the Entente Cordiale Treaty ending Franco-British colonial disputes, is resolutely optimistic.

"France and Britain have been friends, natural allies — and healthy competitors — for over 150 years. We complement each other," British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and his French counterpart Alain Juppe wrote in a joint preface.

"The bond between France and Britain is strong and lasting... the habit of shared analysis, consultation and joint action, already strong, is becoming instinctive," they said.

The brochure stressed the intensity of Franco-British trade, industrial cooperation, military and cultural links even if some joint ventures, such as the Concorde supersonic aircraft or the Anglo-French Suez expedition in 1956, ended in failure.

With understatement more typical of the English, the Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry, Bertrand Dufourcq, told British Ambassador Sir Christopher Mallaby at an anniversary ceremony how highly Paris valued British support in Europe "when we receive it."

Mallaby responded by quoting the 19th century French science fiction writer Jules Verne, who said: "The channel prevents two peoples who were made to get along well together from shaking each other's hand. I shall dig a railway tunnel."

By Nicholas Kotch
Reuters

Madmen's Doctor — a good man in Africa

TAMALE, Ghana — As he "ame out of the operating theatre, his green tunic soaked in sweat, the Madmen's Doctor wanted to know the news from Rwanda.

Told of the latest stomach-churning atrocity committed by soldiers and tribal militias in the central African hell, he shook his head.

"It's terrible, terrible. When will they stop?" Asked Dr. David Abdulai, a folk hero in his home town of Tamale, northern Ghana.

Dr. Abdulai, his wife Doris and their team of volunteer doctors and nurses are Tamale's safety net. They heal and feed the sick, the hungry and the insane, people left behind by the West African country's single-minded pursuit of economic structural adjustment.

"We offer absolutely free and unconditional medical services to the poor and destitute.

"We are a last resort, irrespective of sex, race,

creed, religion or whatever," said Dr. Abdulai.

He took a life-changing plunge in 1989, when he resigned as Tamale's district medical officer and started the clinic on scrubland at Gurugu.

After a first medical degree in Ghana, a second at Liverpool in Britain and a spell working in Zambia, Dr. Abdulai was all set for a successful and lucrative career.

"I came back to Ghana and saw the rising cost of public health care. I decided it wasn't right and gave up my well-paid government job," he said.

The people of Tamale call him the "Madmen's Doctor". Every day he or a colleague get into a pick-up and distribute rations to the half-naked, dreadlocked men who roam the streets and markets of Tamale, as they do in every West African city.

"People think I put sedatives into the food but I

don't. They calm down naturally, just knowing they will be fed."

The surgical team gulp mugs of water, slowly cooling off after the morning's toil in the operating theatre. The clinic is now on the electricity grid and the generator's batteries have been packed up. A solar panel turns the theatre into a furnace.

"We had to amputate a woman's leg. She has cancer," Dr. Abdulai explained.

That day's good news was about the paralysed patient brought to the clinic after a government hospital refused him treatment. He could not afford the laboratory tests.

"That man now has some movement in all his limbs. It is very encouraging," said Dr. Abdulai.

He says the clinic receives no subsidy from government and no regular support from international

charities. "Everything comes from individuals and friends or friends of friends. When we run out of money we look for more."

"All the staff here have been told they will not receive regular salaries. I pay them when I can afford to," he said.

Dr. Abdulai said he was giving food regularly to 2,000 of the 130,000 villagers displaced by ethnic fighting this year in the Tamale region.

He considers the army's relief efforts "very ineffective" and is unimpressed by the slow response of foreign aid agencies based in Tamale. "I saw the food and medical relief simply was not reaching many refugees."

Self-help accounts for the clinic's steady expansion since 1989. The wards are 60 circular thatched huts, identical to those in northern Ghana's villages.

"I have an agreement with local communities. Each one is responsible for building and maintaining a hut where patients from their community will stay. It's up to them to do the repairs," Dr. Abdulai said.

bring more balance (to the debate?)

Muslims in the United States "have full liberty within the American law" and hope eventually to create a strong Arab and Islamic lobbying group, Mr. Alamoudi responded. "But you have to cooperate with us and be patient with us, in order that we can be strong in this country," he said to the participants in Jordan, Yemen and Morocco.

Middle Easterners, said Dr. Said, have a "cultural duty" to help Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans define and crystallise the issues that are driving political Islam in their part of the world. "We need to teach about the fact of Islamic movements and Islam in general," he said. "Islamic organisations in the United States and the West need a media strategy to help them."

Mr. Alamoudi suggested that the problem of "conflict

By Rodney Pinder
Reuters

JOHANNESBURG — After history's page has turned this week and South Africa becomes a democracy, its new black leader may reflect that nothing in his life of trial and struggle has prepared him for what lies ahead.

Apartheid has died but its harsh legacy remains.

President Nelson Mandela — he is projected the winner by all the polls — devoted most of his 75 years, including 27 years in prison, to this moment.

But analysts say he will find that the election was only one of the obstacles on the path to full black liberation.

Three hundred years of white domination and segregation and four decades of its ultimate form, apartheid, have created two nations: an impoverished, largely ignorant, violence-ridden black mass with an affluent, well-educated white layer on top.

The president's overriding task will be to heal hatreds nurtured by the white minority to divide and rule, and to elevate the hungry masses while not scaring off the privileged who created Africa's richest economy largely for themselves.

With a less than sympathetic white-dominated civil service and a questionably-loyal army and police, he will face a myriad of problems.

Never far from his sights will be the winner-takes-all election of 1999 that will replace the multiparty interim government of national unity to be voted in this week.

Mandela's African National Congress says the nation is in a mess: 17 million people below the poverty line, five million — 30 per cent of adults — unable to get work, seven million homeless, nine million illiterate, four million without clean water.

With a population of 40 million, South Africa generates two-thirds of the gross domestic product of tiny Belgium which has a quarter of the people. The economy has been skewed to provide a California lifestyle for five million whites.

The ANC plans a U.S. \$11 billion, five-year reconstruction and development programme. The National Party, fighting to retain power after renouncing its apartheid past, says the ANC's housing, health and education plan will swallow double that money in its first year.

On top of that, the new leader must seek to address the land hunger of a people systematically stripped of their farms, the iniquitous migrant hostel system, desertified and bankrupt tribal homelands and their corrupt bureaucracies, women reduced to third class citizenship — and a domestic crime rate that makes the United States look sedate.

He must also stem political violence that has killed 15,000 people since Africa's last white president, F.W. de Klerk, lifted apartheid's lid from black politics four years ago.

Much of the violence stems from a death struggle in rural Natal not only between the ANC and Chief Mangosuthu Buthe's Inkatha, but between modern democracy and the deeply traditional ways of omnipotent chiefs and witchdoctors.

It was by no means certain that Buthe's eleventh-hour decision to take part in



An ANC supporter carries the new South African flag through the streets of Johannesburg (AFP photo)

Apartheid legacy will haunt S. Africa's black leaders

the election signalled peace. He says he will boycott the government of National Unity, threatening further estrangement with the probable dominant party.

Against the deep-seated enmity of the two giants of black politics, the hostility of the pro-apartheid white right, exemplified by the brown-shirted neo-Nazis of the Afrikaner resistance movement, is seen by analysts as a lesser danger.

The white right blusters, but it sounds like canute railing against the tide of history that has swept through Africa. De Klerk foresees urban guerrilla violence, like the bombing that shook Johannesburg on Sunday, for some time ahead, but predicts it will be "manageable".

Whites voted 2-1 for change leading to black majority rule in a referendum two years ago. Analysts say conservative whites are too weighed down by jobs and mortgages to contemplate lives under arms in the bush

or in exile.

Mandela promises "harsh" action against troublemakers after the election. Analysts agree he will have to be tough, but some say his main source of concern may arise from his own supporters — township youths alienated by apartheid and expecting the world next week as reward for their resistance, and a deep-rooted culture of protest in the labour movement.

Their most articulate champion is Mandela's estranged wife Winnie, who already accuses the ANC's leaders of slipping between the silk sheets, seduced by big business.

Author Rian Malan wrote in *Fair Lady Magazine* of the "joy" whites will feel at watching their nemesis the ANC "Cleaning up the mess we've left behind... trying to collect rents in Soweto, or forcing its juvenile petrol-bombers and stone-throwers to siddown, shaddup and listen to teacher."

Mandela, the towering giant of black South African

politics, will assume the African mantle of Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah and Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, but he will hope to avoid the mistakes that turned their nations into basket cases.

"I see a government that will be careful" to avoid the populist pitfalls of the rest of Africa, says Nedbank chief economist Edward Osborn. "The lessons have been learned."

A regional diplomat said Mandela starts his journey with more advantages than other African leaders — a large industrial and sophisticated banking and business structure — but also more fearsome problems, not least hot-headed black and white South Africans' propensity to reach for their guns.

Zimbabwe's white Transport Minister Denis Norman, who successfully bridged his country's transformation from white-ruled Rhodesia, predicted: "It will not be as good as many hope, but not so bad as they fear."

Islamic movements urged to define goals, engage in dialogue

By Berta Gomez

WASHINGTON — The "conflicting signals" sent by Islamic political movements around the world have contributed to the West's misunderstanding of their goals, believes one prominent American Muslim.

"All Islamic movements should have specific programmes to prove to themselves and to their people and to us in the West that they deserve to rule," said Abdulrahman Alamoudi, executive director of the American Muslim Council.

He cited the example of Islamic activists in Algeria, whom he described as having failed to articulate a consistent message, and whose stated goals range from the "logical" to the "negative."

Mr. Alamoudi was speaking on a recent USIA Worldnet television dialogue with journalists and scholars in Amman, Casablanca and Sanaa. He was joined in Washington by Abdul Aziz

Said, a professor of International Relations at American University.

"Our brothers in the Middle East and Muslim countries are playing an important role in developing their countries and their political systems," Mr. Alamoudi said of the growing number of political groups with an Islamic orientation.

But he and Mr. Said warned that this positive message is not being fully communicated to the U.S. government and public. Mr. Said indicated that the White House and State Department are generally open-minded towards Islamic political movements, but expressed scepticism about the attitude of some members of the U.S. Congress.

One participant in Casablanca expressed dismay over the frequent characterisation of the Islamic revival as a "violent movement" and asked whether Western Muslims were sufficiently organised to combat that

stereotype. "Is the Muslim community in the West united in such a way as to play a role and seek our help so that we can fulfill our duty?" asked the Moroccan participant.

American Muslims, Mr. Alamoudi responded, have only recently begun to organise themselves politically. He added that one of their goals is to enlarge the "circle of dialogue" that includes the U.S. government, Arab and Muslim governments, and Islamic movements around the world.

A scholar in Amman took issue with the Western use of the word "fundamentalist" to describe Islamic political movements. "Fundamentalism is a western product" and not applicable to Muslims, who agree on the sources of Islam, said the Jordanian scholar. He conveyed concern over what he termed the "campaign against official Islam" and the power of the pro-Israel lobby, asking: "Why can't U.S. Muslims

bring more balance (to the debate?)

Muslims in the United States "have full liberty within the American law" and hope eventually to create a strong Arab and Islamic lobbying group, Mr. Alamoudi responded. "But you have to cooperate with us and be patient with us, in order that we can be strong in this country," he said to the participants in Jordan, Yemen and Morocco.

Middle Easterners, said Dr. Said, have a "cultural duty" to help Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans define and crystallise the issues that are driving political Islam in their part of the world. "We need to teach about the fact of Islamic movements and Islam in general," he said. "Islamic organisations in the United States and the West need a media strategy to help them."

Mr. Alamoudi suggested that the problem of "conflict

signals" has been compounded by the reports of violence attributed to some Islamic groups. The anti-government and anti-Western violence of Muslim organisations in Egypt, for example, "has harmed that country and it has harmed us," he said.

He said that American Muslim groups have repeatedly condemned acts of political violence, and called upon their counterparts in the Middle East to take similarly clear positions.

Political violence is "unacceptable," even if it is carried out under the banner of a just cause, Mr. Alamoudi declared. "There are many martyrs among Palestinians... but this does not permit us, as Muslims, to shoot one single bullet without being blamed," he said.

He was also critical of the Islamic regime in Sudan, arguing that its style of government is in conflict with Muslim values.

USIA.

Israeli dreams in Gulf unrealistic

By Youssef Azmeh
Reuters

DUBAI — Israeli dreams of conquering the lucrative markets of the Arab Gulf states are premature and largely unrealistic, Gulf-based businessmen and diplomats say.

They were commenting on the apparent euphoria of Israeli officials who visited a Gulf state for the first time when Oman hosted multi-lateral talks spawned by the 1991 Middle East peace conference in Madrid.

"It is totally out of proportion," one senior Omani official said. "I do not understand all this talk about breakthroughs," he added.

The visit allowed the Israelis their first official contact with a wide range of political and economic figures and gave the Israelis, who came in force to Muscat, an opportunity to mix relatively freely with Gulf Arabs.

"They were understandably delighted," said a Western diplomat. "It broke the ice and was an important first step towards recognition. But they seem to have mistaken the Omanis' natural courtesy for

genuine friendliness," he added.

Another Western diplomat said Israeli political leaders trying to win support for the peace process may be playing up the prospects of a mouth-watering market in the Arab Gulf states that import goods worth some \$45 billion a year.

The senior Omani official said the Israelis, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, were told normal relations, economic or political, were out of the question ahead of peace between Israel and its immediate neighbours.

"We told them (the Israelis) — we will follow your neighbours. We will never be ahead of them in establishing political or economic relations," he said.

"This is not just the position of Oman but of all states of the GCC," he said, referring to the Gulf Cooperation Council that joins Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Gulf officials said that Qatar and Bahrain, due to host further rounds of multi-lateral talks this year, had made clear they were doing

so primarily to underline the commitment of the Arab Gulf states to the U.S.-sponsored Madrid peace process. "We told the Israelis they were misguided if they thought any of us (in the Gulf) would be willing to move ahead of the neighbouring states," the Omani official said.

"There is no prospect of meaningful relations before they have their treaties signed and sealed with Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinians," he added.

"You will not see an Israeli ambassador in Muscat before you see one in Damascus," said another Omani official.

This position was underlined by Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Youssef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah in an interview with reporters who accompanied Mr. Beilin to Oman.

If peace is achieved between Israel and Syria, we can start looking to the future... But one cannot foresee peace between you in Israel and a distant country (like Oman) at a time when there is no agreement on peaceful steps with the neighbouring (Arab) states," he said.

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POWER '94

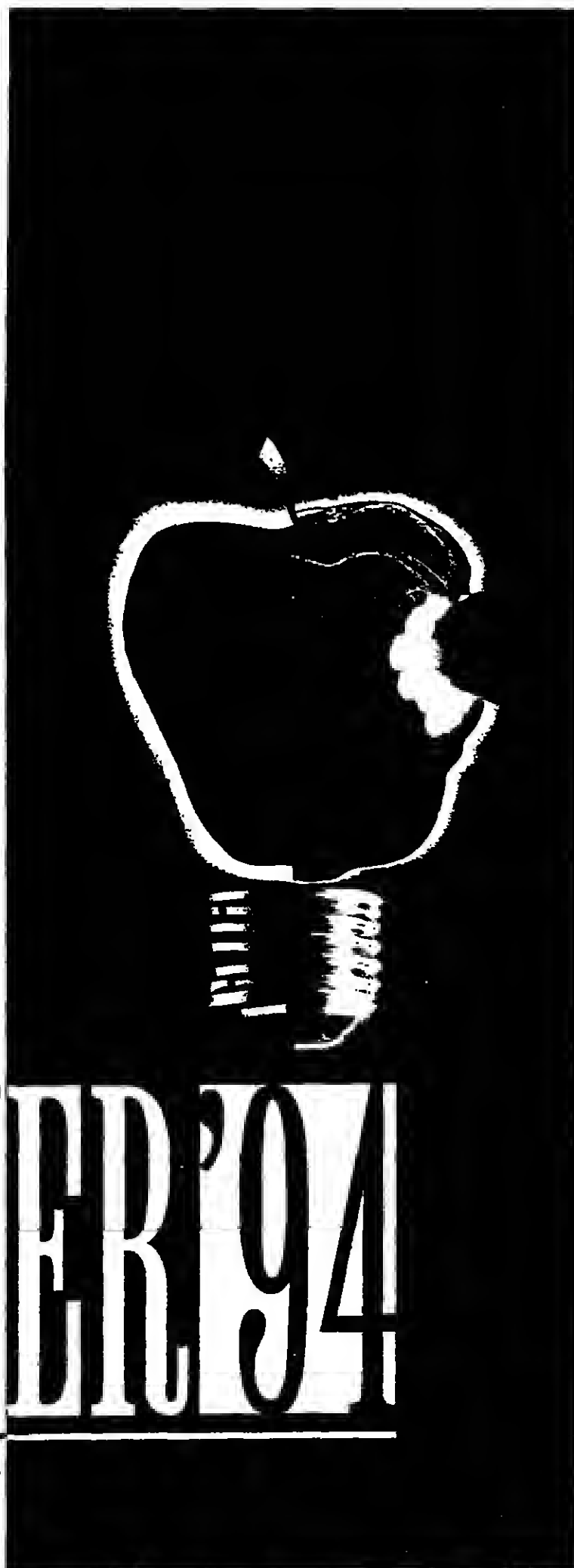
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Reforms, decline in imports slash Arab balance of payments deficit

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A decline in imports by key Arab oil producers and economic reforms by non-oil states slashed the Arab balance of payments deficit by nearly 65 per cent in 1992, an official report has said.

The deficit, which was non-existent during the oil boom, stood at \$7 billion in 1992 compared with \$20 billion in 1991, said the report released by the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund (AMF).

The report divided the 22-member Arab League into two groups: The first comprising the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) plus key oil producers Iraq, Libya and Algeria, and the second the 12 members, which have little oil.

It showed exports of goods and services by the first group increased slightly to \$114 billion from \$113 billion while exports by the second group jumped to \$34 billion from \$29 billion.

"What helped this positive development in exports by the second group is the policy of freeing prices of goods and exchange rates, easing government restrictions on foreign trade and supporting export activities by the private sector as part of economic reforms," the report said.

Imports by the second group rose to \$47 billion from \$41

billion while the first group slashed imports to \$108 billion from \$121 billion in the same period, it said.

Experts said the combined Arab balance of payment deficit was caused by a sharp decline in crude prices over the past decade as oil exports account for more than 70 per cent of the total Arab exports.

In 1980, when oil prices shot above \$30, exports by the first group peaked at \$235 billion, with imports standing at \$114 billion. The balance of payments registered a record surplus of \$121 billion before it started to deteriorate in the following years.

Such exports plummeted to \$108 billion in 1985 when oil prices went below \$20 then recovered slightly to \$113 billion in 1991.

The report said the improvement in exports of goods and services by the second group pushed their ratio to the gross domestic product to 27 per cent in 1992 from between 18 and 24 per cent in the first half of the 1980s.

A breakdown showed members of the first group, except Kuwait and Iraq, had a surplus in their balance of payments in 1992 while all those in the second group were still suffering from a deficit.

The biggest surplus was recorded in the United Arab

Emirates (UAE), standing at \$4.47 billion. It stood at \$1.12 billion in Algeria and between \$1 billion and \$2 billion in Oman and Qatar.

In Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, the surplus was only \$693 million due to a surge in imports, the report said.

Kuwait, which had enjoyed a persistent surplus before the 1990 Iraqi invasion, suffered from a small deficit of \$30 million because of a sharp rise in imports and a decline in oil exports.

Iraq, still under a U.N. embargo, had a deficit of \$728 million, with exports standing at \$413 million and imports at \$1.41 billion. The report did

not give details of the Iraqi trade.

The report, which covered economic developments in the Arab World for 1992, showed public and private investment in the region totalled \$112 billion during that year compared with \$98 billion in 1991.

Around \$83.6 billion were invested in the first group and Saudi Arabia received the lion share, with investment of \$29.5 billion, while no investment was registered in war-torn Somalia.

It estimated the combined Arab gross national product at \$478.9 billion, of which the first group accounted for \$347.7 billion.

Manila earns \$775m in privatisation scheme

MANILA (AFP) — The Philippines earned 21.72 billion pesos (\$775.71 million) on sale of government assets from 1987 to February of this year, the presidential palace said Monday.

A palace statement quoted Asset Privatisation Trust (APT) head Gonzalo Santos as saying that the money came from the sale of 10 government-held companies, including three cement firms and a local telephone concern.

Sixty per cent of the money would be used to fund Manila's agrarian reform programme.

The amount, however, does not include proceeds from the sale of big-ticket companies privatised outside APT, such as Petron Corp. and Philippine Airlines (PAL).

Kuwaiti proposals seen failing deficit challenge

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaiti budget proposals entailing a 50 per cent rise in the deficit in 1994/95 show the government is not serious about tackling the shortfall, an economic consultancy has said.

Under the proposals, a 20 per cent spending cut officials have recommended for the second half of this financial year to curb the growing budget gap would not be carried through into 1994/95, the Al Shall Consultancy said in a commentary.

"The budget proposal does not reflect that direction at all," Al Shall said.

There has been no indication as yet how far the 20 per cent cut recommended by the finance ministry for Jan. 1 to

June 30, 1994, has been implemented.

Al Shall, saying the 1994/95 proposals would reinstate previous levels of spending, added: "The finance ministry failed to provide any justification for its failure to abide by its own recommendations. It (the ministry) attributed the deficit to an increase in defence spending, as if the previous year's deficit was either acceptable or an appropriate yardstick."

"This is not a comforting sign since it gives the impression that the ministry is neither capable of controlling the deficit nor serious about adopting sincere measures to combat it," it pointed out.

The cabinet on April 24 agreed broad plans that would entail a rise of 50 per cent in a net deficit swollen by costs linked to the Gulf war that ended Iraq's 1990-91 occupation.

Most of the rise is due to the inclusion for the first time of allocations for arms procurement that have hitherto been off-budget. The proposed allocations in 1994/95 come to 500 million dinars (\$1.68 billion).

But even leaving aside defence allocations, the proposals represent a mere 1.19 per cent reduction in spending in 1994/95.

Proposed spending of 4.39 billion dinars (\$14.78 billion) and proposed revenue of 2.537 billion dinars (\$8.54 billion) would leave a net deficit of 1.853 (\$6.24 billion), compared to a projected net deficit in 1993/94 of 1.223 billion dinars (\$4.1 billion).

Al Shall said another disturbing sign was lack of clarity in the budget proposals about what flows of state money they actually reflected. It was not clear whether state investment earnings or debt service payments were included, it said.

The deficit rose sharply after Kuwait spent half its reserves on costs associated with the Gulf war, including a \$20 billion payment towards Operation Desert Storm, and further billions on oil sector repairs and handouts to citizens.

Castro says tough measures needed on reforms

HAVANA (R) — Cuban President Fidel Castro says there can be no half measures in his country as it seeks to reduce the "cancer" of excess currency in circulation and return buying power to the island's people.

Speaking on the first day of a special session of parliament to debate steps to clean up the nation's finances, President Castro urged "political courage" for steps he said would be tough and which needed the maximum understanding from the people.

The Cuban leader spoke after his finance minister, Jose Luis Rodriguez, presented a wide range of possible measures aimed at reducing excess

pesos in circulation and cutting a yawning state budget deficit, including price hikes on a series of goods and services, and moves to stimulate more and longer-term savings.

The minister's speech amounted to a blueprint for important changes in communist Cuba, facing severe economic crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of traditional trade and aid ties. The Caribbean island is engaged in a process of cautious economic liberalisation.

It was not clear how many of the lengthy list of possible steps suggested by Mr. Rodriguez would eventually be

taken. The parliamentary session was called to approve guidelines for measures and not the steps themselves.

"We should not do anything by half," urged President Castro.

"If we are going to take half measures we might as well not do anything. We have to resolve the problem... we have to try to ensure that money is worth something," he said.


Cuba's internal financial problems are typified by the average worker, who might earn 200 pesos, spends less than half of it on rent, services and scant state-distributed food and the rest of it on exorbitant black market prices for items as necessary as cooking oil.

The official exchange rate for the peso is one per dollar, although the Cuban currency changed hands for around 100 times less than this on the black market. The dollar, whose use was legalised last year, is now widely used on the black market.

Many of the deputies, President Castro and Mr. Rodriguez included, urged measures against people getting rich by illicit means amid the current economic crunch — such as black marketeers or people illegally buying and selling houses.

"The worker has to win the battle against the person who does nothing," President Castro said.

Possible steps suggested by Mr. Rodriguez included price



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An unidentified resident shows the new notes he just drew from his account Monday on the Bank of China's first day of issuing banknotes. The bank is offering five values of the local currency (AFP photo)

He said interest rate raises would not necessarily work as a stimulus to more and longer-term savings, suggesting the creation of savings accounts with a specific destination for spending, or accounts "that allow the immobilisation of funds for a fixed time, a sort of special savings bonds."

He also suggested fixed term hard currency savings accounts and the issuing of some form of state bonds.

On control of hard currency, whose use was legalised eight months ago, Mr. Rodriguez said the state had to gain greater control over its circulation, adding one possibility was the issue of a convertible or hard currency peso for use in the country.

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Mike Arghison

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ROWCE
EYAPE
TALNE
DOAFER

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: O O O O " O O O O - O O O O "

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: NEWSY GOURO SUBTLY FIDOLE
Answer: What the young couple called their drive to lovers lane — A "BUSS" RIDE

HOROSCOPE
FORECAST FOR TUESDAY MAY 3, 1994
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: The morning finds it possible for you to make plans that could give you added abundance in the days ahead if you take a new tack where productive ideas are concerned. Avoid one who gossips.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Think what must be done to improve relationships with business allies. Delve into new activities and get excellent results which show.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Keeping promises you have made to associates is important at this time. Be alert to what is going on around you and you will be very successful.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Obtain important data you need from the right sources, then go ahead with plans you have made. Express happiness to those around you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Assets from different sources could come your way at this time. Good time to engage in creative activities which will be very beneficial.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Don't let anyone force you into a situation that you know is not right for you. Be poised at all times today for a beneficial situation.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) One who understands your life's goals can be helpful to you at this time. Come to a fine accord with associates on any new endeavour.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Personal matters are fine to follow now, but be sure to carry through with what family members expect of you in the days to come.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have plans for getting ahead, but take your time in putting them in operation. Relax at home tonight with those you are most fond of.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Plan how to be more successful in business dealings and be more productive. Maintain harmony at home and everything will be great.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Listening with interest to what allies have to say helps them cooperate more with you, and you with them. Be logical on any project today.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Put new ideas to work

THE Daily Crossword by Don Johnson

ACROSS
1 Nonsense
5 Across Burstyn
10 Flow
14 Fit
15 Dudley or Demi
16 Forces
17 Bandleader of old
18 Labor
20 Westside in speech
21 "Little..." (Alcott)
22 Inasmuch as
23 Offer
24 Hang around
25 Fictional sleuth
31 Faithful
32 Rascal
33 Iran ruler, once
37 Classifies
38 Some summer
39 Put on
40 Copies
41 Curb
42 Special esteem
43 Lester Platt's partner
45 Flow
48 Success
50 Pigment
51 Muscular guy
54 Cow or horse
57 Underused one
58 Singer-songwriter
60 East end of a church
61 Skirt style
62 Medial herb
63 Grampa Walton
64 Skirt feature
65 Hurl

DOWN
1 Love alone
2 Woodwind
3 Run-down area
4 Layer
5 Personality
6 Rich earth
7 Run out of the moult
8 Shamrock land
9 Once called
10 Shiny fabric
11 Painted part
12 Vestment
13 US president
18 Revolver trinket
22 Transgress
23 Outdoors
24 Composer
25 Famous lioness
26 Chicago section
27 Harp's cousin
28 Odd
29 Panding
30 Blustful places
31 Corrupt
34 Exalted
36 Towel word
39 Holy place
41 Scatter
42 Carrot
44 Swiss dwelling
45 Wagon wheel wedge
46 Brownish grey
47 Wheel cycle
48 Enroll
51 Foyer
52 Indian
53 — Lisa
54 Rural sight
55 Supper
56 Slaughter
58 Grows old
59 Surpass
60 Crazy

Peanuts



Mutt'n'Jeff



Economy

ADB warns against 'swift and dirty' development

NICE, France (AFP) — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Monday warned against "swift and dirty" growth in member states, saying the region's timber reserves might vanish in 40 years as cities breed politically explosive slums.

ADB experts said in a report released at the 55th annual meeting here that although environmental planning was enjoying broader Asian support, the "green" campaign could wilt amid a global aid shortage.

"The industrial revolution in the Asian and Pacific region has been both swift and dirty," said the report to ADB members, comprising Asian developing countries and their industrial trading partners.

The region "can be proud of its growth record in recent years, but it cannot disregard its failure to protect its environment resources," added the report, blaming high population growth as a key factor.

Asian countries have paced the rest of the world in economic growth for more than two decades and are forecast to remain the fastest-growing region in the next few years, averaging seven per cent annual expansion.

But Asia, with half the world's population, is still home to two-thirds of its poor. By ADB estimates more than 700 million Asians are trapped in poverty, while people in Tokyo, Hong Kong and Singapore enjoy incomes and lifestyles on a par with the West.

The bank, which advocates "sustainable development," cited deforestation — closely

linked to rapid population growth — as the most urgent environmental problem in the region.

It said one-fifth of Asia's land area was still forested but with more and more mouths to feed, the tree cover was vanishing at the rate of four million hectares (10 million acres) a year, while replanting moved half as fast.

"At current rates of harvesting, the region's remaining timber reserves will disappear in less than 40 years," the report said.

Biodiversity is also at great risk, the ADB said, pointing to Bangladesh, where fully 94 per cent of the wildlife habitat has been wiped out.

Kazi Jalal, chief of the environment office in the ADB, said "the situation is not yet desperate," citing growing

awareness of the problem in Asia, especially economics. The report also noted a trend toward intensive farming, which requires less land to clear to produce more crops.

However, poorer countries do not have funds or institutions to sustain environmental programmes.

The rising popularity of environment issues runs smack into a squeeze on aid money resulting from the world recession, making it difficult to achieve the lofty goals of the 1992 earth summit in Rio de Janeiro.

"Without new sources of finance the extensive effort prescribed by the earth summit will not succeed," the report said.

The Philippines-based ADB also called attention to runaway urbanisation in Asian de-

veloping countries, where cities would account for half the population by 2020.

Twelve of the world's 20 "megacities" will be found in Asia by the turn of the century, and despite increasing attention to the urban poor, "in many cities, poverty remains a potentially politically explosive problem."

The ADB has lent out close to 50 billion since 1966, mostly on infrastructure projects. It created an environment unit in 1987 to improve the environmental impact of its projects and address regional problems.

The bank has resolved to devote half of the number of projects it approves to social and environmental objectives, though they will still comprise a smaller portion of the funds committed to borrowers than traditional projects.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen warned over the weekend that the Federal Reserve would continue to intervene against "excessive fluctuations" of the dollar. The new Japanese government of Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata met Saturday to discuss developments.

"As long as we stay below 105 yen, the market's tendency will be to try to smash the 100-yen barrier," Mr. Corign said.

Some market participants nevertheless said the statements in Washington helped support the dollar, given that the United States often uses the threat of a stronger yen to exert pressure on Japan in bilateral trade talks.

"The American government has clearly understood the need to defend the dollar as it's worried about the impact a weak dollar would have on the bond markets," said Masayuki Hanaoka, a dealer at Bank of Tokyo Ltd.

Mr. Hanaoka said the dollar was likely to resume climbing once the market gets the feeling of having "achieved its goal" in pushing the currency lower.

"Although the trend has not changed, there is quite a good chance of a rebound of the dollar," he said.

Tatsuhiro Iwashige, from Dutch Bank AMB-Amro, also sees the dollar recovering.

"Towards the second or third week of May, the dollar should resume climbing," he said, predicting an exchange rate of around 105 yen by then.

Jordan will not attend signing

(Continued from page 1)

"reservations and firm positions" in the modalities and mechanism of the proposed arrangement.

AFP adds from Cairo: Syria will not attend the signing of the Palestinian autonomy accord, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said Monday.

"I do not think Syria's Foreign Minister (Farouk Al Sharaf) will attend the ceremony," Mr. Musa told reporters.

Damascus has criticised the PLO-Israeli deal on limited autonomy as a "separate deal" undermining Arab solidarity and Syria's quest for "global peace."

In Tunis, Palestinian officials said PLO Political Department chief Farouk Kad-

doumi had also turned down an invitation from Egypt to attend the ceremony.

Mr. Kadoumi, who has expressed reservations over the deal, refused to attend the historic Sept. 13 ceremony at the White House, when the PLO and Israel signed the declaration of principles opening the way for autonomy.

In total 50 Palestinian officials were invited to the ceremony, including former chief negotiator Haydar Abdul Shafi and spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi, Palestinian officials said.

An Egyptian diplomat said many Arab officials had agreed to attend, including the foreign ministers of Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia and Oman.

Doha meeting opens today

(Continued from page 1)

"Definitely we hear more willingness and tranquillity than previous times... it seems to me that today there will be more openness," he told the Israeli media.

Syria and Lebanon, which see the multilateral talks as a mechanism to normalise the status of the Jewish state, have

boycotted the multilateral talks since the beginning insisting progress should first be made with Israel in bilateral negotiations Jordan, which is protesting interceptions of ships bound for its Aqaba port by the U.S.-led task force enforcing sanctions against Iraq, has sent an observer.

4 Israeli soldiers wounded

(Continued from page 1)

Tal, Israel radios said. The ragged edge of the town and its refugee camp has been the sight of frequent gunfire towards new outposts guarding the settlements.

The ambush caused the jeep's driver to lose control and it overturned after crashing through a fence, an army statement said.

An officer and a soldier were seriously injured in the gun-

fire, while two other soldiers were only slightly injured when the jeep flipped, the statement added.

The army started searching for the assailants and several Palestinians were detained for questioning.

A spokesman said the army had to loosen its open fire orders, restricted after soldiers killed six supporters of PLO leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction in an April shootout.

Israel, Syria in serious phase

(Continued from page 1)

within Israel's ruling Labour Party and among the electorate erupted in parliament and at a party meeting.

Three motions for no-confidence in the Rabin government were introduced in the Knesset.

Critics said Israel was not getting anything in return for its overtures to Mr. Assad. Israeli sources acknowledged

the gap between the two sides remained wide.

The prime minister's response was that he had not drawn a line of withdrawal on a map for the Syrians. But sources who declined to be identified acknowledged that Mr. Christopher did not return with any specific Syrian concession.

Mr. Christopher will go to Cairo on Tuesday.

Bhutto to introduce sales tax

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto plans to introduce a sales tax in the next fiscal year from July, despite opposition from business and consumers, press reports have said.

She told editors of national daily newspapers in Karachi that she had decided to change

the tax situation maintained by the previous governments.

She advised the public to be prepared for a harsh budget which is expected in June, and said that the government was meeting tough resistance from industry and business on the proposal to levy a general sales tax.

Her government has recently increased prices of some consumer goods, including the staple wheat flour, triggering a campaign against inflation and almost daily protest rallies by opposition parties in different cities.

However, Ms. Bhutto forecast that the steps initiated by her six-month-old government would reap a rich harvest in 18 months.

Report finds tourists spending big in Australia shops

CANBERRA (R) — Tourists are spending more than 1.5 billion Australian dollars (\$1.1 billion) a year in Australian shops, a government survey has found.

"We've vastly underestimated the importance of tourists to the retail sector," Tourism Minister Michael Lee said in a statement accompanying the survey.

"We've just assumed they buy the furry koala, souvenirs and duty-free goods," he said.

But it now appeared tourists spent much of their money in department stores buying a fairly broad range of merchandise.

The survey found that Japanese tourists spent the most in shops, despite their relatively brief vacations in Australia.

Japanese spent an average of 95 Australian dollars (\$68) a day on shopping for a total of 709 Australian dollars (\$506) per trip.

British and Irish tourists, grouped together, spend 646 Australian dollars (\$461) in shops on an average visit, but only 14 Australian dollars (\$10) a day, since many of them are backpackers on extended trips.

Typical Australian souvenirs still feature prominently.

Japanese market foresees dollar falling below 100 yen

TOKYO (AFP) — The recent show of support for the dollar by Japanese and American authorities is not enough to prevent it from falling below the 100-yen barrier in the next few days, dealers said Monday.

"The market is not that impressed by these statements and the yen will break through the 100-yen limit (to the dollar) next week," said Luc Corign, chief foreign exchange dealer at the Tokyo branch of Banque Nationale de Paris.

The dollar closed at 101.80 here Monday in quiet trading ahead of a three-day holiday break. On Friday, when Japanese markets were also closed, it tumbled to 100.70 yen in European trading, close to the currency's all-time low of 100.40 yen on Aug. 17 last year.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen warned over the weekend that the Federal Reserve would continue to intervene against "excessive fluctuations" of the dollar. The new Japanese government of Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata met Saturday to discuss developments.

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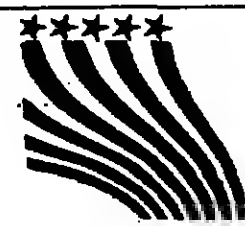
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S. Korean troops on alert after North's unusual military moves

SEOUL (R) — President Kim Young-Sam Monday ordered the nation's 650,000-strong armed forces to keep an around-the-clock vigil following unusual military moves by Communist North Korea in recent days.

"The Defence Ministry should be fully prepared to cope with any eventuality" with all the soldiers exercising a 24-hour watertight vigilance," Mr. Kim was quoted by an aide as telling a meeting of security-related cabinet ministers.

A Defence Ministry spokesman said the presidential statement was not meant to increase the level of alert but to stress that troops should always maintain their vigilance.

"We are not seeing the unusual North Korean movements of recent days as a sign that they will commit a serious provocation against the South," the spokesman said.

Mr. Kim's instruction came as the United Nations forces stationed in South Korea accused the north of violating a 41-year-old armistice agreement by deploying more soldiers and weapons than permitted at the tense inter-Korean border.

A U.N. Command (UNC) spokesman said North Korea, which has in recent days described the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War as "a worthless piece of paper," had increased forces at the

Panmunjom frontier crossing to unacceptable levels.

"Early in the evening on April 29, the (North) Korean People's Army (KPA) for several hours had more men and weapons in the joint security area (JSA) at Panmunjom than permitted by the armistice agreement," a UNC spokesman said.

Tension is always high in the Panmunjom JSA, a circle 800 metres in diameter, because each side is permitted to have up to 35 military police inside.

"As with similar violations in the past, the U.N. Command is addressing the issue with the KPA through the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) channel," the spokesman said.

South Korean Armed Forces and U.S. troops were put on alert for about three hours Saturday when about 20 North Korean aircraft were monitored flying towards Seoul.

The South's Defence Ministry said the North Korean Air Force appeared to be on a regular training exercise but it was very unusual that it was conducted on a Saturday.

During Monday's security meeting, the first since South Korea named a new unification minister Saturday, Mr. Kim said North Korea recently withdrew several members of its MAC secretariat on resident duty at Panmunjom.

Mr. Kim was quoted by his aides as saying North Korean

soldiers equipped with arms and helmets appeared at Panmunjom last Friday, breaking the armistice pact.

The number, movement and dress of North Korean and U.N. troops stationed at Panmunjom, the only crossing point on the inter-Korean border, is strictly laid down under the armistice agreement.

The UNC spokesman said in a separate statement North Korea had announced its intention to withdraw from the MAC, which supervises implementation of the Korean truce.

The North has boycotted MAC meetings since a South Korean general was appointed head of the five-person UNC delegation in March 1991, replacing an American.

"Mutual agreement is required to alter the armistice agreement and such an action would constitute a fundamental change to that agreement," the spokesman said.

"UNC officials are working to resolve this matter through continuing dialogue with KPA representatives and careful consultation with allied governments and other forces involved in the armistice agreement," he said.

Military commanders for North Korea, the United States and China, which aided the North, are signatories to the military truce which has never been converted into a peace treaty.

A Seoul Defence Ministry

official said the North Korean move could be interpreted as an indication the hardline Stalinist state was trying to nullify the commission.

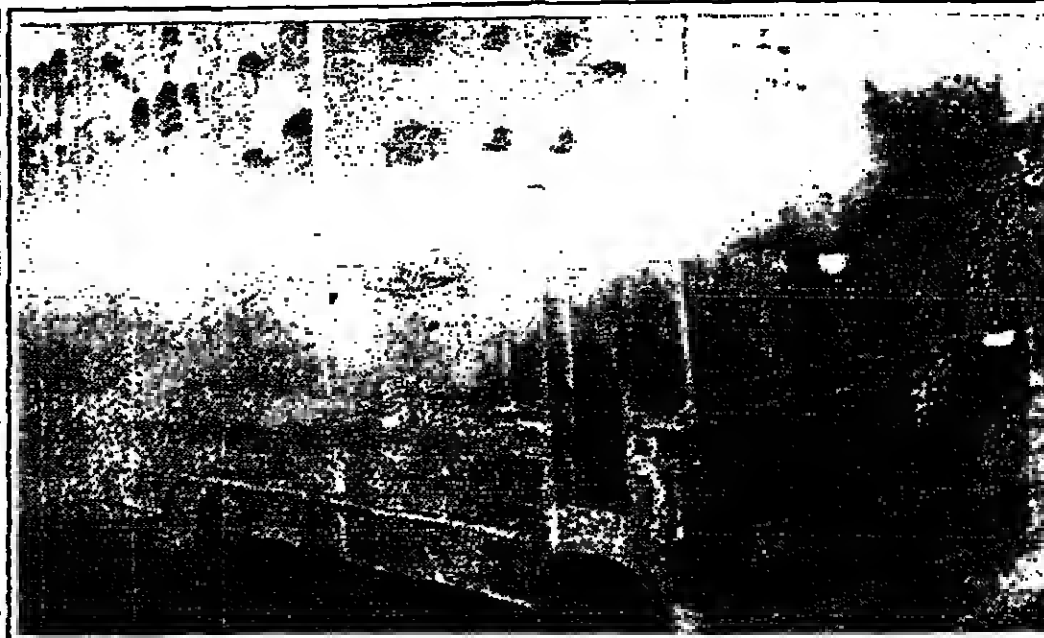
North Korea, which has defied the United Nations by refusing to allow full inspection of its nuclear facilities by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) officials, last week proposed negotiations with the United States to replace the armistice with a peace agreement.

But a U.S. State Department spokeswoman said last Thursday the armistice remained "in full effect and all practical arrangements that would keep open the lines of communications between the U.N. Command and the North Korean military are still in place."

Meanwhile, the IAEA said Monday time was running short for its bid to monitor refuelling at North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear plant, but it has yet to break a diplomatic deadlock over inspection terms.

North Korea wants to start refuelling at the five megawatt reactor — suspected by the West of being part of a covert nuclear weapons programme — in early May.

But Pyongyang has put unacceptable terms on its invitation to inspectors from the IAEA to observe the work, IAEA spokesman David Kyd said.



KARACHI UNREST: Smoke rises from a gutted bus stopped in the middle of the street as a result of in city-wide disturbances. More than 21 vehicles were burned during ethnic unrest which already caused six people to die. Tension remained high in Karachi Monday as fighting continued between the police and supporters of the Mohajir Qasbi Movement (MQM) and the death toll rose to 13. Six more people were rushed to hospital with gunshot wounds, bringing the number of injured to more than 60 in four days since police opened fire Friday on an MQM gathering, killing two supporters. One woman was shot dead overnight Sunday amid continuing violence in the central and eastern parts of the city. Three vehicles, including two ambulances, were set ablaze, fire brigade sources said. At least 38 vehicles, including two public transport buses, have been burned so far. Masked gunmen have also been roaming the streets firing in the air and creating panic, residents in the troubled areas said (AFP photo).

Mortar fire kills 14, in Rwanda capital

RUSOMO, Rwanda (R) — Mortar fire killed at least 14 Rwandans and wounded 150 in a church compound where they had taken refuge from heavy fighting in the capital Kigali, aid workers said Monday.

At least two mortar bombs exploded late Sunday near the Sainte Famille Church, said Mactar Gueye of UNAMIR, the U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda. "We were not able to detect exactly who shelled the camp."

Kigali, where government forces are battling advancing rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), suffered "one of the heaviest days of shelling we have seen," said Patrick Gossier of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

"Mortars didn't hit the church itself. They hit the surroundings and people were hurt in a market area," Mr. Gossier said.

At least 14 were killed outright, he said. Some 60 of the wounded were transported to the ICRC's makeshift hospital, set up to cope with horrific

casualties in recent weeks, and others were taken to Kigali's central hospital.

"I don't know how many were left behind who didn't have a chance."

Hospital facilities are overstretched in a city where the United Nations estimates some 20,000 bodies are lying unhurt.

The United Nations says about 2,000 mainly Tutsi civilians are clustered around Sainte Famille where they have sought refuge from marauding pro-government Hutu militias since chaos erupted in the wake of President Juvénal Habyarimana's death in a rocket attack on his plane on April 6.

"They are running from certain death," said Mr. Gueye. UNAMIR peacekeepers protect about 14,000 civilians in buildings around the city, but the militias issued fresh threats last week to hatcher these people, officials said.

UNAMIR troops visited the Sainte Famille area Sunday, but they are not there permanently. The ICRC said gov-

ernment authorities had posted police to guard the area.

On April 19 last month government forces fired mortars at the U.N.-guarded Amahoro Sports Stadium in the RPF-controlled part of Kigali where some 5,000 people are sheltered, killing some 60, U.N. officials said.

Aid officials are struggling to provide supplies for up to 250,000 refugees who fled from Rwanda into northwestern Tanzania as the RPF advanced in recent days.

The flood of refugees dried up over the weekend but the RPF denied allegations that it had formally closed the border.

U.N. special envoy to Rwanda Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh was due to visit Uganda's capital Kampala Monday to meet President Yoweri Museveni to discuss efforts to secure a ceasefire.

U.N. officials said Mr. Booh-Booh would also go to Anusha, the northern Tanzanian town where a peace accord was signed between the parties 10 months ago.

Yeltsin: Russia's danger is next president

PARIS (Agencies) — The "real danger" for Russia lies in who its next president will be after the 1996 election, President Boris Yeltsin said in an interview Monday in the French paper Le Figaro.

"That is what could pose problems for Russia," he said, explaining that for the moment at least no likely candidate was in view. "Perhaps in two years a personality will emerge who would be recognised by the whole people," Mr. Yeltsin added.

He refused to reply to questions about his own intentions regarding the 1996 presidential race, asserting: "I do not discuss that subject."

Yeltsin was interviewed to mark the publication of the French edition of his book *The View From The Kremlin*, an account of last year's rebellion in parliament which came close to ousting him.

He dismissed the idea of Russian backing for Bosnian Serbs, saying Moscow wanted to stop the fighting. America had greater influence with the Muslim Slavs, Germany with the Croats and Russia with the Serbs, so the three powers should get the warring parties to the negotiating table to sign a peace agreement, Mr. Yeltsin said.

He told Le Figaro what the Russian market in consumer goods was picking up. He would not claim it was the best-stocked in the world, but it was beginning to resemble markets in "civilised countries."

Mr. Yeltsin's arch-foe Alexander Rutskoi, the former vice president who played a prominent part in last October's uprising, meanwhile told the Independent Moscow television station NTV that he would set up a patriotic socialist movement in three weeks "to take power." Members would be strictly vetted and subject to "iron discipline," and there would be no place for dissenting views.

Mr. Rutskoi said the civil peace pact signed last week by political parties and others was a bid by Mr. Yeltsin to make "hostages" of his opponents. Mr. Rutskoi and the Communist and Agrarian parties plus some conservatives refused to sign.

"The goal of this movement is to come to power, because without power we can't realise the goals we've set," Mr. Rutskoi told NTV, the independent news show.

Itogi also aired a copy Sunday of what it called a "curious document" it obtained — a decree signed by Mr. Rutskoi and dated Oct. 3, the day of bloody street riots in Moscow, ordering that Mr. Yeltsin's top allies be detained and pre-

vented from leaving Russia. Mr. Rutskoi called the decree a forgery and accused Mr. Yeltsin's camp of circulating it to ruin him.

Mr. Rutskoi declared himself president on September after Mr. Yeltsin, breaking months of political gridlock, disbanded the old hardline parliament. Armed supporters of Mr. Rutskoi and the old parliament's leaders noted, surrounding after Mr. Yeltsin turned tanks against the building on Oct. 4, scores of people were killed in the clashes.

The former vice president was arrested and charged with inciting riots, but was released in February under an amnesty granted by the new parliament.

Since then, Mr. Rutskoi has been an outspoken critic of the administration, and particularly of the political peace pact signed this week by Mr. Yeltsin and various parliamentary factions. Mr. Rutskoi told Itogi the truce was nothing but Mr. Yeltsin's "one man show."

Although Mr. Rutskoi is viewed as a potential candidate in 1996 presidential elections, Mr. Yeltsin has dismissed him as a spent force and accused him of instability.

Mr. Rutskoi is even vying with Mr. Yeltsin as an author, telling Itogi he will tell all in a new book, *Collapse Of The Empire*.

John Denver performs in Vietnam

HANOI (AP) — Country singer John Denver brought his message of music as a healing force to Vietnam Sunday, becoming the first American star to perform in the Communist country since the Vietnam War ended in 1975. The United States and Vietnam still have no diplomatic relations. Progress toward restoring relations was made in February when President Bill Clinton dropped a 19-year trade embargo of Vietnam. Denver and his four-man band played to a mixed audience of Vietnamese and expatriates in Hanoi's Cultural Palace. Vietnam is his last stop on a six-nation Asian tour. "It actually is a bit of a dream come true for me to sing here," Denver said after arriving in the Vietnamese capital Saturday. "I was just starting my career back when we were at war with the country." Denver said he was fortunate not to have been drafted into the military, due to two missing toes. He joined in anti-war protests in Washington and elsewhere, he said. "I thought if I ever go to Vietnam, it will be to sing there," he said. Denver told his listeners in between songs that he cared deeply about helping to create a greater sense of global community and partnership.

Man, 12-year-old daughter suspected in robbery spree

NEW YORK (AP) — A man trained his 12-year-old stepdaughter to help him rob elderly people in elevators, police said Sunday. Stanley Everett, 34, and his stepdaughter, whose name wasn't released, were arrested Saturday in connection with two April 11 robberies at Lower East Side housing projects. They're suspected of many more robberies, said housing police Lt. Thomas Shordone. Mr. Everett and his stepdaughter would get on an elevator with an elderly tenant, who "would be lured into submission by the fact that he was with a little girl," Lt. Shordone said. "He would grab them by the neck and she would go into their pockets and take their property."

Planned Tower of Babel to be world's tallest

SHANGHAI (R) — Shanghai's \$92-million television tower, tallest in Asia and third tallest on Earth, has been completed, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. The 460-metre (1,509-foot) Oriental Pearl tower comprises three huge "spheroids" thrust aloft by chunky pillars, each nine metres (30 feet) in diameter. The spheroids contain restaurants and other facilities accommodating more than 1,000 tourists, Xinhua said. The tower's tallest self-supporting tower is Toronto's CN Tower at 553 metres (1,815 feet). But China plans a 700-metre (2,296 foot) TV spire in Shenzhen near Hong Kong topping that.

Yeltsin 'not hearing bells' any more

MOSCOW (R) — The bells of the Kremlin's Ivan the Great Bell Tower, which this Russian Easter rang for the first time since Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin banned them in 1918, were silenced again — by Russian President Boris Yeltsin. Moscow's Echo Radio said the test chiming ahead of the mid-night Eastern service stopped abruptly after a man told the bell-ringers the noise was disturbing Mr. Yeltsin. Lenin banned the use of the tower's bells after moving the seat of the Bolshevik government to Moscow 76 years ago. Moscow municipality had been restoring the bells for the past two years.

In Singapore, plump is pretty and prosperous

SINGAPORE (R) — While slim women appeal to younger Chinese Singapore men, plump partners are preferred by older men because corpulence signifies prosperity, a survey by a Singapore woman's magazine shows. The survey in the May issue of *Citta Bella* magazine showed Chinese Singapore men between 20 and 30 were put off by fat women. It showed those between 41 and 50 did not like either skinny or chubby women. But those above 50 tended to appreciate women on the plump side. "It gives a woman a look of prosperity," one respondent was quoted as saying.

Sihanouk warns of peril of war

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodian head of state King Norodom Sihanouk said Monday that his pleas for peace were falling on deaf ears and that his country would continue to be victimised by war.

"It's very sad, very unfortunate to have war, continual war," King Sihanouk said in emotional remarks to a small group of Cambodian journalists. "Why? Our people, all our people, they are victims of war and our country is a civil-war victim."

"It's unreasonable to destroy our own country, our national wealth. We must put an end to this war but no one listens to me."

King Sihanouk said there was no prospect of peace talks now between the government formed after U.N.-run elections a year ago and its bitter enemy, the Khmer Rouge, who refused to face voters.

"The roundtable cannot take place for the time being because there is a very serious difference between Phnom Penh and the Khmer Rouge," he said.

King Sihanouk had originally proposed five days of peace talks starting May 2 to be held in neutral territory at the royal palace under his chairmanship.

The Khmer Rouge's nominal leader, Khieu Samphan, rejected the offer, saying the government was incapable of guaranteeing his delegation's security.

The charge was denied by the government, which said it could "guarantee 100 per cent" the guerrillas' safety in Phnom Penh.

The king was meeting with the government co-premiers, his son Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen, Monday evening and he said earlier he would get their views on

trying to hold peace talks in France.

The Maoist rebels, responsible for the deaths of a million Cambodians by execution, disease and starvation during their brutal reign in power lasting from 1975 until 1979, have continued to wage a guerrilla war to back their demands for a senior advisory role in government.

"The military situation in the northwest is very bad for the time being," Major-General Chhin Chheang, director of international relations at the National Defence Ministry told Reuters.

King Sihanouk said there was one encouraging sign about peace talks, government permission to allow the Khmer Rouge to stay in the royal palace itself. But this was refused by the Khmer Rouge.

Japan prepares laws to deal with N. Korean crisis

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan has prepared emergency legislation to deal with the crisis over North Korea's suspected development of nuclear weapons, government sources were quoted as saying Monday.

But the sources said the new minority government of Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata had not yet decided whether to submit the legislation to parliament, given expected opposition from the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

"We have already finished preparations for emergency legislative arrangements," Jiji Press quoted one government source as saying. Mr. Hata, sworn in as prime minister Thursday last week, was meanwhile quoted by Kyodo News Services as saying he had not received any official reports on such preparations although the government "seems" to be considering the issue.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroshi Kumagai said Sunday it was "natural that we prepared ourselves for various scenarios" and indicated that the emergency legislation had already been prepared.

"We recognise that fears about the North Korean problem will be soon realised," the official government spokesman said.

The emergency bills are expected to include amending the self-defence force law to ease restrictions on Japanese military activities abroad when either the country or its citizens are involved in international disputes.

But an even bigger majority, 69.9 per cent of the 2,000 eligible voters polled, called for an early general election before the lower house completes its full four-year term in mid-1997.

The survey also found that 61.5 per cent of voters supported last week's sudden decision by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) to leave the coalition, a move which forced Mr. Hata to form the first minority Japanese cabinet in 39 years.

While approval for Mr. Hata

Most Japanese back Hata but want early election

TOKYO (AFP) — Most Japanese support the minority cabinet of Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata formed last week, but also want early elections, according to a survey published by the Sankei Shimbun Monday.

The survey, conducted by the newspaper and the Fuji Television Network Friday and Saturday, found 62.1 per cent support for Mr. Hata's cabinet, down from the 63.4 per cent enjoyed by Morihiro Hosokawa's cabinet formed in August last year.

But an even bigger majority, 69.9 per cent of the 2,000 eligible voters polled, called for an early general election before the lower house completes its full four-year term in mid-1997.

The survey also found that 61.5 per cent of voters supported last week's sudden decision by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) to leave the coalition, a move which forced Mr. Hata to form the first minority Japanese cabinet in 39 years.

was lower than for the Hosokawa government, which included the SDP, the Sankei noted that it was still higher than the ratings for Liberal Democratic Party cabinets over the previous four decades.

Separate weekend polls found lower levels of public support for the new cabinet. A Kyodo News Service poll of 1,000 voters released Sunday gave Hata 51.6 per cent support while a Yomiuri Shimbun poll of 1,500 voters published Saturday gave the new prime minister an approval rating of 56.8 per cent.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Hata, who took office last week, left Monday for a tour of Italy, France, Germany and Belgium, aiming in part to build confidence in Japan's first minority government in 39 years.

Mr. Hata, who has previously held such portfolios as finance, foreign affairs and farming, wants to ally concerns of European leaders ahead of the group-of-seven

(G-7) industrialised countries' summit in Naples, Italy, in July, government sources said.

The week-long tour had been planned months ago for Mr. Hosokawa, who stepped down on April 8 amid controversy over his past financial deals.

European leaders will be looking at ways to reduce Japan's \$30 billion trade surplus with the European Union, but analysts said Mr. Hata's political weakness might not give him much room for manoeuvre at home.

Mr. Hata will try to reassure his European hosts that Japan wants to deal equally with the United States and the EU and give each equal access to Japan's market.

His new cabinet decided at the weekend to boost imports and work to stem the yen's rise against other major currencies.

European officials are concerned that Japan will bow to U.S. pressure and give its trade deficit with the United States priority treatment.

The EU, which favours re-

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PLO accuses World Bank of reneging on pledge

TUNIS (Agencies) — A senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official accused the World Bank Monday of failing to provide funds it had promised the PLO to help launch Palestinian self-rule.

PLO Executive Committee member Mohammad Zuhdi Nashashibi said the PLO was ready to transfer 3,000 officials to the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho to implement Palestinian self-rule.

But he attacked the World Bank for not putting up the funds it had promised for building an infrastructure in Gaza and Jericho, and said the PLO's financial crisis had hampered preparations for autonomy.

"If we have to we will stay in tents," he said, adding the most important thing was "to respond to our people's hopes for independence."

Thousands of PLO officials are anxiously awaiting the final signature on a deal launching Palestinian self-rule, and the chance to start administering Gaza and Jericho.

But senior officials accused PLO leaders of keeping them in the dark about the timetable for the return of the 3,000 currently based in the PLO headquarters in Tunis.

"We are awaiting the hour of our return impatiently, but for the moment we have not been told of any decision, or given any instructions to sort out our affairs," said one official.

Mr. Nashashibi said timetables and detailed plans would be announced "when the time is right to avoid any disorder or confusion."

But another official said the PLO was being cautious to avoid any repetition of the

disappointment felt after the Israeli withdrawal failed to start on Dec. 13.

"Until the accord with Israel is a hard fact, PLO leaders don't want to risk another shock like Dec. 13," he said.

Then several families had already been given the go-ahead to leave Tunis and were left stranded for the winter, having given up their homes and sold their furniture.

Mr. Nashashibi, who is vice president of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDR), said the Palestinians had created adequate structures and were sufficiently competent to manage self-rule.

There has been a flurry of activity in recent weeks at the offices of Fateh, the main PLO faction.

All PLO staff have filled out forms giving their names and status as well as details of their political affiliations, professional qualifications and where they would prefer to be sent back to.

Since March 17 Fateh leaders have been analysing the questionnaires, to designate staff and administrators to the autonomous areas, said Fateh official Abbas Zaki.

Stock exchange planned

The Palestinians will be allowed to set up their own stock exchange as part of autonomous rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, an Israeli official said Monday.

"The Palestinian authority or the town of Gaza will be able to issue bonds while private companies could offer shares quoted on a stock exchange similar to the one in Tel Aviv," said Arik Gordin, spokesman for the Israeli de-

legation to economic talks with the PLO.

"Israelis will be able to invest in the exchange if they want," said Mr. Gordin following the Paris negotiations which led to Friday's signing of an agreement on the economic aspects of self-rule.

"It's up to them to evaluate the risks and maybe to prefer Gaza city bonds over Israeli bonds."

The economic accord will be incorporated in the overall agreement which Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat are set to sign in Cairo on Wednesday.

Under the economic deal, the Palestinians will have "the authorities, powers and responsibilities regarding the regulation and supervision of capital activities... including the licensing of capital market institutions, finance companies and investment funds."

Oved Ben Ozer, chairman of the union of Tel Aviv stock exchange brokers, said there was no reason why Israelis should not invest in Palestinian companies.

"The international community will give more than \$2 billion for autonomy and the Palestinians have a pool of cheap labour as well as capital among those living abroad. That should enable strong economic growth," he said.

"But everything will depend on the political conditions. Without a minimum of calm and political stability investments will not be forthcoming."

But Mr. Ben Ozer cautioned that it would take time to launch an exchange. "The Palestinians will need time to create the right conditions for a real economic take-off."

ECC reviews unemployment

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali on Monday chaired a meeting for the Economic Consultative Council (ECC), which discussed the problem of unemployment and means of solving it as provided for in the 1993-97 five-year development plan. Council member Awni Al Masri presented a paper at the meeting on the educational policies in Jordan. Dr. Majali noted that the government had presented to the Lower House of Parliament draft laws on higher education and the Applied Sciences University. The council also discussed the issue of foreign workforce in Jordan. Labour Minister Khaled Ghazi said the government had set up a ministerial committee to follow up the issue, pointing that 45,000 foreign workers have valid work permits, while the rest work in the Kingdom illegally.

German giant pledges to help self-rule

STUTTGART, Germany (Agencies) — The boss of Germany's biggest industrial conglomerate Daimler-Benz on Monday pledged the giant group's economic aid to a fledgling Palestinian state.

Daimler-Benz Chairman Edzard Reuter was having talks in Stuttgart, where the group has its headquarters, with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat whom he had invited for a brief visit to Germany.

Mr. Reuter said he and Mr. Arafat agreed to develop economic cooperation and cross-border infrastructure going beyond the Palestinian territories to involve Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

The Daimler-Benz boss said: "We do not simply have a passive interest in the peaceful development of the Middle East countries, we want to be a part of this process."

"We will do everything possible to help improve the living and working conditions of the people in the region."

Mr. Arafat arrived in Stuttgart on Monday after he and other top officials of his Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), meeting in Tunis late Sunday, accepted an accord with Israel for Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Mr. Arafat and Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin are scheduled to sign the accord in Cairo Wednesday, although the PLO leader indicated Monday that some points were still outstanding.

He said he hoped to hammer these out in Cairo Tuesday with Rabin, observing that it "takes two to tango" but that "where there's a will there's a way."

The PLO leader stressed that Palestinian infrastructure had been totally destroyed in the struggle with Israel and it was necessary to "start from zero." Children, who constituted the future of Palestine, were a priority, he said.

Mr. Arafat also stressed the cultural and social sectors. Of his visit to Daimler-Benz, he said: "This type of active involvement by foreign companies is vital to our future success."

The PLO leader also called for regional cooperation at the Mediterranean level, and stressed that the lands concerned were holy for the Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions.

Mr. Reuter said that Daimler-Benz was going to launch a programme for Palestinian children in conjunction with the U.N.

The Daimler-Benz boss also presented his guest with an integrated transport plan for the present and future Palestine, produced by a group consulting company.

Mr. Arafat was given a tour of the company's headquarters where he viewed products from Mercedes-Benz vehicles to helicopters and rail equipment.

The company sent a private jet to Tunisia to pick up Mr. Arafat. He and a group of political and economic advisers were driven from Stuttgart airport into the city in a convoy of 17 armoured Mercedes limousines, with police helicopters keeping watch. About 100 police with bomb-sniffing dogs guarded the meeting site.

Mr. Arafat and Mr. Reuter discussed a wide number of possible projects, including transport, energy, and communications, the company chairman said.

Moves under way to 'institutionalise' Jordan's peace talks

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — With a cabinet change or a major reshuffle in the cards after Parliament's current extraordinary session, measures are being considered to "institutionalise" Jordan's negotiations process to ensure continuity in the negotiations after an expected change of hands, official sources said Monday.

Ibrahim Badran, advisor at the Prime Ministry and former secretary general of the ministries of trade and industry and energy, has been tipped as "general coordinator" of the Middle East peace talks file in a move seen as "institutionalising" the negotiations process and delinking it from any possible change in government or ministerial portfolios.

The yet-unnannounced appointment came after a decision to move the "negotiations file" from the Prime Ministry to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a senior source said.

The task of the new office at the Foreign Ministry, which will be guided by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the head of the committee overseeing the work of the Jordanian negotiating delegations, "is to improve the coordination level among the different negotiating teams."

Well-informed sources said that the new office has been

supplied with facilities and resources to fund its research operations.

One senior official who confirmed the move said it was only "routine," but other sources maintain that there were "complaints" over gaps in coordination work among the different negotiating teams to the bilateral and multilateral talks.

A well-informed source told the Jordan Times that there had been complaints that "the negotiations process has become dependent on a few people and that the lack of coordination between them affected the overall Jordanian position in the negotiations."

"At time statements from the different negotiators appeared contradictory because of the personalised nature of how the details of the negotiations were coordinated," one source said.

Until this move the "negotiations file," as it is referred to by the sources, has been largely supervised by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Minister of State for Prime Minister Affairs Jawad Al Anani.

But "there was a clear need to give a structure to the whole negotiations procedure under one independent central office so that it would not be hampered or affected by an impending change in government or portfolios."

People flee Bangladesh coast as cyclone nears

CHITTAGONG, Bangladesh (Agencies) — Hundreds of thousands of people fled coastal Bangladesh on Monday as a cyclone with winds up to 210 kilometres per hour threatened the same area where a cyclone killed 151,000 people in 1991.

As high winds and powerful waves lashed the shore, relief boats evacuated some of the seven million people who live on islands and along the 400-kilometre coast of the Bay of Bengal.

They were being taken to 900 brick storm shelters that have been built since 1991. But the shelters can only house one million people, so many other residents fled inland from their mud-and-thatch houses on the coast.

Rescue workers rushed through the lowlands using loudspeakers to urge people to move inland to the shelters or school buildings.

Waves were predicted to reach three metres and flood low lying areas with a tidal surge.

Bangladesh, a nation of 120 million people precariously built on river deltas, suffers from ruthless cycles of tropical storms, flooding and drought nearly every year.

More than 350,000 people reached shelters in Cox's Bazar district, according to its administrator, Enamul Kabir. Rescue workers hoped to move another 300,000 there by sundown, he said.

"The killer is coming again... stop it, or else we shall all die," said Mohammad Karim, 68, a fisherman who lost nine family members, including his wife, during the 1991 cyclone.

Mr. Karim was jammed into a two-storey shelter with 1,500 other evacuees in Cox's Bazar, a seafaring town. "The cyclone took nearly everything from me before. Now it is coming again to take me," he said, crying and beating his chest.

Palestinians jubilant over eased Jordanian regulations

By Sana Attiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

SOUTH SHUNEH — Jihad Seid, 28, was waiting for this day when he could freely come into Jordan to visit his brother without the usual bureaucratic red tape of having to acquire an entry permit from the Jordanian authorities.

Mr. Seid, from the West Bank town of Jericho, came into Jordan for the first time in his life on Sunday, the day the Kingdom implemented a decision to ease restrictions on Palestinians from the occupied territories crossing into the country over the King Hussein bridge.

As of Sunday, Palestinians from the occupied territories, particularly men aged between 26 and 36, no longer need entry permits and are now allowed unlimited residency in the Kingdom.

"When I heard about the new regulations, I decided to try and come to see my brother," said Mr. Seid, as he waited at the King Hussein Bridge arrival terminal for passport clearance.

"It only took me 15 minutes to get through this," said Wael Nofal, 34. "I did not need the entry permit to come to Jordan."

Mr. Nofal, a citrus fruit trader from the West Bank town of Kalkila, told the Jordan Times as he was leaving the terminal to find a ride to Amman that he needed an entry permit the first three times he crossed into Jordan this year, and that it took him at least one hour to pass through the passport control.

"Just waiting for the permit sometimes delayed my work for weeks," said Mr.

Nofal. "The easing of these regulations will make life and business much easier from now on."

Last week, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan issued instructions to ease restrictions on Palestinians coming to Jordan from the occupied territories.

After the Kingdom's 1988 severance of legal and administrative ties with the West Bank, which was under Jordanian rule when Israel seized the territories in 1967, Amman introduced restrictions mainly to ensure that the young men did not flee their homeland because of difficult economic conditions under occupation.

They were not allowed to overstay a one-month visit to Jordan, and were prohibited from returning to the Kingdom if they violated any of the conditions for their stay.

"The earlier measures were aimed at consolidating Palestinian steadfastness in the occupied territories and blocking Israeli plans of pushing Palestinians from their homeland," Minister of Interior Salameh Hamad told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, on Friday, adding that these measures were no longer feasible.

The easing of restrictions now allows Palestinians unlimited residencies as long as their Israeli return permits remained valid. Palestinians who were banned from visiting Jordan for violating rules have also been pardoned and can return to the country. In addition, Palestinian women married to Jordanian men are now allowed to live with their husbands in the Kingdom.

In line with the new regulations, the follow-up and in-

Ghali upholds freedom of press worldwide

AMMAN (J.T.) — The General Assembly adopted a decision on Dec. 28, 1993 designating May 3 as World Press Freedom Day. This year, for the first time, World Press Freedom day will be observed worldwide.

World Press Freedom Day concerns everyone. It concerns those who live in societies which benefit from a free press, and it concerns those in societies where freedom of the press is absent or incomplete.

To that extent that the press is free, it serves both as the conscience of a nation and as a practical means of achieving good government. A free press exposes corruption. It provides the people with independent and competing opinions. It provides governments with a rich array of policy recommendations.

In the context of such vast significance, the press bears as well a tremendous responsibility. As a reflection of opinion, as a shaper of policies, as a crusader for justice, a free press must recognise the power it wields and rise to the level of responsibility which a free society deserves.

In too many parts of the world, power lies not in the hands of the friends of freedom but with its enemies. The freedom of the press comes only with long, hard and brave support — and when it is achieved it must be defended on a daily basis. With the spread of democracy in recent years, press freedom also has spread to areas of the globe where it had been suppressed for years.

In such locations, press freedom remains a fragile achievement. Determination and vigilance are needed to enable a free press to take root and come to full flower in its social and political role.

World Press Freedom Day is more than a day to celebrate the achievement of a free press. It is a call to convey the benefits of freedom of the press across all societies. This day is thus a day to call for freedom. It is through a free press that the cry of the oppressed can be heard around the globe.

As a former journalist, I supported the growing world movement toward an independent and pluralistic press. The duty to inform is as important as the right to know. I extend my best wishes to all who are involved in this, the first World Press Freedom Day — a U.N. press release.

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Frenchman wins architecture award

LOS ANGELES (R) — French architect Christian De Portzamparc, best known for designing the City of Music Academy in a park in suburban Paris, was named winner Monday of the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize.

Mr. De Portzamparc, 49, is the first Frenchman to win the award since it was set up in 1979 by the Pritzker family's Hyatt Foundation. He will be presented with a \$100,000 grant at a ceremony in Columbus, Indiana on June 14. "Christian De Portzamparc's new architecture is of our time, bound neither by classicism nor modernism," the award's jury said in a statement. "His expanded perceptions and ideas seek answers beyond mere style. He is part of a new generation of French architects who have incorporated the lessons of the beaux arts into an exuberant collage of contemporary architectural idioms, at once bold, colourful and original," it said. Most of Mr. De Portzamparc's works are in France, although he recently designed apartment buildings in the Japanese city of Fukuoka. He has no works in the United States. Together with 1984 winner Richard Meier, Mr. De Portzamparc is the youngest winner of the Pritzker Award. His first commission was in 1971 for a water tower in a Paris dormitory town. He modelled it on the Tower of Babel and covered it with fine mesh open trellis work that supports climbing plants. Since then he has built numerous housing developments and music-related projects. The City of Music is one of the so-called "grand projects" of French President Francois Mitterrand aimed at spurring an architectural renaissance in his country.

Ford stands by decision to pardon Nixon

VAIL, Colo. (AP) — Former U.S. President Gerald Ford says he's still convinced he helped the country by pardoning Richard Nixon, his White House predecessor. "I was right when I made the decision in September of 1974, and I'm more convinced today that it was the right decision for the country as a whole," Mr. Ford said in a telephone interview with the Vail (Colo.) daily newspaper. Mr. Ford lives in nearby Beaver Creek. Mr. Nixon, who died last month, was the only U.S. president to resign. He quit after the 1972 break-ins at the Watergate apartment complex in Washington unleashed a scandal over harassment of his political opponents, taped telephone conversations and obstructing investigators. Mr. Nixon faced certain impeachment when he resigned on Aug. 9, 1974. Mr. Ford issued his unprecedented pardon a month later. "It would have been a long, tortuous process — the indictment, the trial, probably a conviction on some counts, an appeal," said Mr. Ford. "That would have taken two, three, maybe four years. That would only have exacerbated the unrest and the domestic trouble here in the United States. And the only way to get the whole problem off my desk in the Oval Office, the only way for me to concentrate 100 per cent of my time on the problems of 240 million Americans, was to grant the pardon."

'Herpes drug lengthens AIDS patients lives'

SYDNEY (R) — High doses of the drug Acyclovir, used to treat herpes, significantly stretch the survival of AIDS sufferers, according to a study by one of Australia's leading centres fighting the disease. A 1992 study of outpatient clinics in 16 hospitals in Australia and Europe revealed that Acyclovir could increase the survival time of people with acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) when compared with a similar group of patients who took placebos. "The study has shown that Acyclovir can extend life by around six months, a significant advantage in this serious disease," David Cooper, director of the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research at the University of New South Wales, said Monday. The Australian government's health department is considering licensing Acyclovir as a therapeutic drug in the fight against AIDS, Dr. Cooper said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wife says Arafat never gives her jewels

CAIRO (AFP) — Palestine leader Yasser Arafat's wife Suha complained that her husband lives like "a bachelor" and has never given her any valuable presents, such as jewellery. "He still lives like a bachelor. He has his bedroom, and I have mine. We live as if we were separated," she told the Egyptian daily Al Akhbar. Suha Tawil, who is in her thirties, married the 64-year-old Arafat two years ago. She told the paper her husband had never offered her jewels or valuable things "not even on special occasions." When I complain of being neglected, he offers me souvenirs, and symbols of the Palestinian revolution. "Of course we argue, but we make up immediately afterwards." She added that "when it comes to women, he is a gentleman." Suha revealed she has to wait until "three or four o'clock in the morning" to talk to her husband, who is so overwhelmed with his political activities that "he hasn't even got time for a shave every morning." Mrs. Arafat said Hillary Clinton, wife of U.S. President Bill Clinton, was her model as a first lady. Asked about her dearest wish, Suha said: "Of course it is the establishment of a Palestinian state." She said: "I hope it will come true in five years" after the planned interim Palestinian autonomy period in the occupied territories.

Iraq to close embassy in Sweden

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Iraq will close its embassy in Stockholm in mid-May as a result of cost-cutting measures by the Baghdad government, the Swedish daily Svenska Dagbladet (SVD) reported Monday. The Swedish foreign ministry confirmed Monday that it had received notification of the closure. According to SVD, it is the United Nations' current trade embargo on Iraq that is forcing the closure. Iraq is expected to close 15 of its embassies in the near future, many of them in Western Europe, SVD said.

Vietnam, Mali to boost ties with Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, received Vietnamese President Le Duc Anh and praised his nation's former struggle against the United States in the Vietnam war, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported. IRNA said the Vietnamese leader expressed the desire to "bring a new phase" in Iranian-Vietnamese relations after meeting Mr. Rafsanjani Sunday to discuss political, technical and trade cooperation. "No doubt, the two countries with the exchange of their valuable experience can be useful to each other in the period of their reconstructions," Mr. Rafsanjani was quoted as saying. Malian President Alfa Omar Konare left Tehran Monday as the latest in a string of foreign leaders seeking to boost ties with Iran, IRNA said. Mr. Rafsanjani accepted an invitation to visit the West African state, according to IRNA. The agency did not give a date for Mr. Rafsanjani's planned visit.

Kuwaiti pocketed \$7m in kickbacks

KUWAIT (AP) — A former official pocketed more than \$7 million in illegal kickbacks on purchases for the state-run Kuwaiti Oil Tanker Company (KOTC), according to an audit bureau report published Monday. The report said the audit bureau had evidence that KOTC Director Abdul Fatah Al Bader received \$7.2 million for the purchase of two old tankers July 1989. The money went into a personal bank account and represented 10 per cent of the value of the tankers Bubiyan and Jabriya. Mr. Bader is on trial for embezzlement of public money from the KOTC. He fled Kuwait before the case went to court in January. His whereabouts are not known. The report by the emirate's financial watchdog, published in Al Siyassah newspaper, did not say where the oil tankers were built. The report was prepared at the request of parliament, which is looking into the country's investments and management of public money. The report said KOTC incurred a \$58.8 million loss in the purchase of the two tankers. They were in bad shape and the company had to sell them less than a year after they were purchased.

Turkish Golden Horn bridge restored

ISTANBUL (AFP) — Turkey's 80-year-old Galata Bridge spanning the Golden Horn at Istanbul has been restored at a cost of more than \$4.6 million after being destroyed by fire in 1992. The refurbished structure is located a few kilometres from the site of the original bridge. The first two-storey bridge, with restaurants and cafes on one level, was commissioned by the Ottoman empire in 1912 from the German builders MAN at a cost of 250,000 gold pieces.

Egyptians celebrate spring festival

CAIRO (R) — Millions of Egyptians went to the countryside or to the banks of the Nile on Monday to celebrate Shamm Al Nassim, an ancient and mysterious spring festival observed by Muslims and Christians alike.

Hundreds of thousands flocked to Cairo zoo or took their picnic baskets to the public gardens around the Qanater Al Khairiya, a series of irrigation dams north of Cairo.

Shamm Al Nassim, Arabic for "smelling the breeze," shares some of the pagan symbolism of the European Easter, especially the custom of painting eggs for children.

People also eat onions, lettuce green freshly picked chick-peas and a heavily salted fish called fiseekh.

Egyptians say the festival has its origins in Pharaonic times but the date is tied to the calendar of the Coptic Orthodox Church. It is the day after Easter Sunday.

The authorities announced special traffic arrangements for the mass exodus from Cairo and said they were deploying more police to prevent criminals taking advantage of the crowds.

They said hospitals were on alert for cases of fiseekh poisoning — a regular hazard of the festival.

At least eight people died and scores were critically ill after eating fiseekh in 1991.

Government inspectors have been touring the markets for days, confiscating dozens of tonnes of fiseekh which they decided not fit for human consumption.

Government newspapers took the occasion of Easter and Shamm Al Nassim to sing the virtues of "national unity" — the political codeword for harmony between the Muslims and the Copts, who make up about 10 per cent of the population.

"Egypt's Muslims and Christians are of one stock, part of the same social fabric, all are brothers in their love of Egypt," the minister of religious affairs, Mohammad Ali Mahgoub, said on Sunday.

One version of the festival's origin says it takes the name shamm from the name of a season in the language of ancient Egypt. The "breeze" part was added after Arabs conquered the country in the seventh century.